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# STUDIES OF AN IMPERIALIST

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**PRACTICAL GEOMETRY AND ENGINEERING DRAWING**  
(Spon, 1874 ; 2nd Edition, 1884).

**THE PRINCIPLES OF GRAPHIC STATICS** (Spon, 1879 ; 2nd Edition, 1888).

**PLEVNA** (1880, Royal Engineers' Institute).

**FORTIFICATION, PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE** (John Murray, 1890 ; 2nd Edition, 1897).

**THE LAST GREAT NAVAL WAR.** By "A. Nelson Seaforth"  
(Cassell & Co., 1891).

**IMPERIAL DEFENCE** (1897, The Imperial Library).

**THE NAVY AND THE NATION.** By Sir George Sydenham Clarke and Mr. James R. Thursfield (John Murray, 1897).

**RUSSIA'S SEA POWER** (John Murray, 1898).

**KINGLAKE'S INVASION OF THE CRIMEA.** Student's Edition  
(Blackwood, 1899).

**MY WORKING LIFE** (John Murray, 1927).





*Sydenham & Cornbe 1927*

# STUDIES OF AN IMPERIALIST

BY

LORD SYDENHAM OF COMBE

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HON. COLONEL 63RD AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY

WITH A FOREWORD BY

FIELD-MARSHAL

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## FOREWORD

As explained in the Preface, this collection of Essays is divided into three sections—War, India, and Socialism. With respect to the first-named—the only section to which these observations are intended to apply—the reader will appreciate that it constitutes the work of a man who has had a very wide experience in dealing with naval and military affairs. More than forty years have elapsed since the writings of Lord Sydenham, then a comparatively junior officer in the Royal Engineers, began to attract public attention, and to be accepted as valuable studies of the questions to which they referred. Incidentally, they served, as I can personally testify, to stimulate and to inspire with fresh ideas the rising generation of officers, who were destined to direct and command our Armies during the critical period of 1914–1918.

War is not a popular theme in these days, and I certainly do not wish to imply that it should be. I may, however, suggest that the last war might have ended far less satisfactorily for us had the nation not had the benefit of Lord Sydenham's services in the years that preceded it. For example, he took a prominent part in the establishment of efficient over-sea communications, naval bases, and coast defences ; in the investigation of numerous strategical and administrative questions carried out by the newly created Committee of Imperial Defence ; and in the reconstitution of the War Office and the belated formation of a General Staff. Had the recommendations of the Hartington Commission, of which Lord Sydenham was Secretary, been acted upon, the General Staff could have



been formed some sixteen years earlier than it was, and many of the shortcomings which characterized the war in South Africa would thereby have been avoided.

Written in a non-technical manner, the Essays here selected for re-publication present no difficulty to the civilian reader, and, in the principles advocated as well as in the lessons conveyed, they contain much that is useful not only to Soldiers, Sailors, and Statesmen, but to all and sundry who desire to understand some of the more important naval and military factors by which the security of the Empire is affected.

W. R. ROBERTSON, F.M.

2 DECEMBER, 1927.

## PREFACE

ALL who reach old age after leading strenuous lives find themselves inevitably drawn towards retrospection. The earnest student of affairs must remain such to the end, and the gathering shadows cannot obscure the exigencies of the present or deny vision of the future. The craving to be of use to one's country persists, though increasing disabilities destroy all hope that it can be satisfied; but the younger generations, bred in circumstances which tend to a new outlook, easily come to believe that the conclusions which age has accumulated and the principles of national policy and of conduct which once held the field are no longer valid. For this reason the plain lessons of history are frequently lost, and mankind has to learn again from bitter and painful experiences much that is written in letters of flame on the records of the past.

To all who have studied deeply and written voluminously with the aim of warning and of guiding thought in their time, it is natural to look back with a critical eye upon the quality of their efforts. I began, a few years after I joined the Army, to write on technical and scientific subjects, at a time when the apparent chance of my appointment on the Staff of the Indian Engineering College, established at Cooper's Hill in 1871, provided leisure and suggested this form of literary activity.

Before 1879, I had drifted away from civil to military science, to which my later studies at Bermuda, Gibraltar, Malta, in Egypt and the Sudan, on the Continent and in North America, gave new scope. After 1882, it seemed

natural to devote my life not only to the Army, but to the service of the Empire as a whole, which opened out a wide range of subjects, and, among them, the Navy in all its aspects, historical and technical, was prominent for many years.

From 1885 to 1892, as Secretary to the Colonial Defence Committee, I was learning daily about the outlying parts of the Empire, and opportunities were given for trying to apply some of the principles of Imperial defence at which I had arrived. From 1894 to 1901, as head of the Royal Carriage Department at Woolwich, I was plunged deeply into Artillery questions of all kinds, and also able to learn invaluable lessons in administration and the management of men.

The scene abruptly changed, and, as Governor of Victoria, I found myself in the best position to study the working of democratic government in Australia, then far more "advanced" than our own, and to understand the difficulties of young countries and the psychology of their citizens.

Again there was a transformation, and I was suddenly recalled to London, at first to play a part in the reconstruction of the War Office and to help to realize some of the principles of administration for which I had long and earnestly pleaded, and later for three and a half years, as Secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence, to serve directly under two Prime Ministers and to be brought into close contact with the mechanism of the government of an empire. This period, during which I was permitted to raise any question which seemed to be of Imperial importance, present or future, and to act as remembrancer in Naval, Military and cognate matters to the Head of the Government, was an education of infinite value.

In 1907, for the fourth time, my life underwent a drastic change, and I was flung into the fascinating Old World of India to face many difficulties and domestic tragedy, but

to add the East to my Imperial studies. There, for five and a half years, I was learning every day, and a whole new vista of thought opened out to my vision.

Anyone returning to England in 1913 after a long period of anxious and absorbing work could not fail to be alarmed at the trend of political forces here and on the Continent, when the world was heading straight for an unparalleled catastrophe. Thence onwards my thoughts were mainly directed, first to the tremendous drama of the War and afterwards to political and economic questions, including the ever-baffling problems of our Eastern Empire and its involved implications.

In a period of fifty-five years, of which ten spent abroad were barren of literary output, I produced eleven books ; but the immensely greater part of the results of my labours is scattered over many magazines and newspapers, our own and foreign, or buried in Hansard.<sup>1</sup> A book has the advantage that it passes into libraries, and being then available for reference, becomes as nearly a permanent record as a student can expect.

In the hope that some few of my thoughts may be worthy of such record, this work has been compiled. It has been most difficult to make selections from a huge mass of publications and speeches ranging over many years, and I have sought to include only those which embody principles that seemed—to me—important, describe in convenient form conditions now forgotten, or

<sup>1</sup> Thus I wrote for *The Times* twenty-three articles on the Nile Expedition of 1884-85, twenty-five on the China-Japan War of 1894-95, and many more on the Burmese War of 1885, the Greco-Turkish War of 1897, the Tirah campaign, and the Spanish-American War of 1898 and the South African War. In addition I was a frequent contributor to *The Times* on general naval and military questions. During the Great War, I wrote ninety articles and letters in *The Times*, and over 130 in other newspapers. Since the Armistice more than 1,000 articles and 300 letters of mine have appeared in the Press, including more than thirty long articles in magazines.

deal with world movements, little understood and still progressing. This has led to division into three sections—War, India, and Socialism—all dealing with matters which, directly or indirectly, bear upon the fortunes of our Empire.

Part I—by far the largest—covers a great variety of subjects naval and military, beginning with reviews of the lives of Nelson and Moltke from which I have learned many lessons. I have reproduced articles on the Bombardment of the Forts of Alexandria (1882), which was full of warning, and on the Suakin-Berber Railway, once a burning question, together with my appreciation in 1885 of one of the earliest submarines—the germ from which sprang the craft destined powerfully to influence the Great War and to bring us within measurable distance of defeat. *Invisibility* (1886) was my first effort to reduce to principles the methods of camouflage which proved of vital importance in the Great War and will never become obsolete. In *The Franco-German Frontier* (1887) I tried to analyse the geographical and military factors which led to the conclusion that Germany would strike at France through Belgium. The five articles dealing with the Army are selected from many in which I pleaded for reforms. They are faulty in some respects; but they represent what at the time seemed to be the main objects to aim at, and in 1904–6 some of my proposals were adopted, and certain principles for which I long fought have entered into our Army organization and administration. One speech out of many on the question of the blockade of Germany may help to avert oblivion of a ruling factor in the War with which, for various reasons, we played with too long at terrible cost of life and treasure.

In Part II some of the results of five and a half years' study of conditions in India are recalled. My speech (6 August, 1918) on the Montagu-Chelmsford Report was the first attempt to explain in public the implications of that

classic State paper. It is followed by my reflections, five years later, on the practical effects on the life of India of an exotic constitution which Miss Mayo has justly described as "weedy, a stranger to the soil, forced forward beyond its inherent strength by the heat of a generous and hasty emotion."<sup>1</sup> Now that the governance of 320,000,000 souls is again to be overhauled, in conditions vastly more difficult than those of 1918, the views and experience of an old student and lover of the Indian peoples may not be wholly inopportune. It will at least be recognized that most of my misgivings have been abundantly justified. I regard the future of India as by far the most important internal question with which the Empire is confronted to-day.

Part III deals with Socialism and kindred subjects, which I studied on my return to England in 1913, when the growth of Socialism appeared to be—apart from the German Peril—the most ominous portent on the political horizon. The War, as was certain to happen, added hugely to the forces working consciously and unconsciously for revolution, and after the capture of Russia by Marxian Communists, a special attack was persistently directed against the British Empire. To the organizations, open and secret, working with this object, I have devoted fourteen years of study, finding the subject infinitely complex and always baffling. Only by carefully watching events all over the world, for which our overworked rulers and most of our younger men have no time, is it possible roughly to analyse and to estimate the dark forces arrayed against civilization and Christianity which well-meaning Socialists, lacking knowledge, effectively support. In the past fourteen years I have written copiously on these subjects in their many aspects; but the conclusions I have reached are necessarily incomplete and much remains

<sup>1</sup> *Mother India*, by Katharine Mayo (Jonathan Cape & Co., 1927).

obscure. I have included only some reflections economic and political, beginning with what was, I believe, the first attempt to explain the meaning of the Labour programme early in 1918. *The Peril of Socialism* was written before I was aware that the "Labour" *Report on Reconstruction* was only a modified version brought up to date of Mr. Sidney Webb's pamphlet *Wanted a Programme* secretly circulated among "leading London Liberals" in 1888. Most of the disastrous proposals, which I tried to expose in this article, form the basis of Socialist policy to-day; but the Capital Levy—formerly the sheet anchor of "Labour" Finance—has been temporarily abandoned in favour of a crippling surtax on unearned incomes.

My speech on 22 July, 1920, on the League of Nations, appears in Part III, because the Press does not give full reports of debates in the emasculated House of Lords, and back-benchers cannot expect space. In the enthusiasm of the time this speech naturally fell flat; but any unprejudiced observer who has tried to follow the tangled proceedings at Geneva will before long admit that, while there are, as I said, many tasks which the League can and does accomplish with benefit to the nations, it tends to become a danger to our Empire. Sir A. Chamberlain's almost passionate outburst this year has a marked significance. Meanwhile, intrigue is rampant—during the Sessions of the League especially—and the Labour Bureau, permeated with Socialism and directed by a revolutionary Socialist, attempts by its numerous Conventions to undermine the sovereignty of nations and, in co-operation with internationalists of every hue, stealthily enfeebles national patriotism.

The last article, written before the conclusion by the Coalition Government of the Trade Agreement with the wreckers of Russia, feebly expresses my indignation at the handling of relations with the most dangerous enemies we have ever known. Not till this year, when the Bolsheviks

had created a situation plainly intolerable, was the national honour, dragged through the mire since the Prinkipo proposals, partly vindicated. The story of the proceedings, for which successive Governments are responsible, constitutes in my opinion an indelible stain on the national escutcheon, and incidentally illustrates the inversion of traditional principles of right and wrong that we have been condemned to watch since the Armistice.

If history is to render any service to mankind, a bare chronicle will not suffice, and a chronicle, even if reasonably accurate, may distort all proportion in its presentation of events. Of this there are shocking examples. The main object of the honest historian must be to trace the true connection between cause and effect, eliminating personal bias while investing his narrative and comments with literary charm. In the hands of the materialist school—now popular in some quarters—the virtues and the vices of nations and of men are hidden by the ascription of all happenings to what may be called economic conditions, and the moral law is ignored. History in this form is more false than that which assigns periods to individual rulers invested with exaggerated powers of good and evil. The destinies of nations and of men are shaped by a complexity of forces great and small, some following inexorable natural laws still imperfectly understood and beyond human control, others capable of being directed to definite ends by the will power of individuals. Failing the gift of intuition, which is often untrustworthy, the sane direction of affairs, public and private, must depend wholly on knowledge implemented by character.

For forty-five years the Empire has been my inspiration, and to further its security and progress my one preoccupation. I regard the dangers—psychological rather than material—which now confront the British people at home and abroad as more menacing than at any previous period in our long and chequered national life. I can only hope



that this book, in spite of imperfections and necessary limitations, may perhaps give some help to others who will plough the fields in which I have long and strenuously laboured.

LONDON, OCTOBER, 1927.

S. OF C.

*Note.*—My best thanks are due to the Editors of *The Times*, *The Nineteenth Century and After*, the *Edinburgh, Fortnightly* and *Empire Reviews*, and the *Financial Times*, for permitting me to republish articles which have appeared in their pages.

## LIST OF ARTICLES AND SPEECHES IN THE BOOK ARRANGED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

(Notes on the Articles and Speeches will be found in the Index under  
"Clarke, George Sydenham.")

1883, September	The Lessons of the Bombardment of Alexandria.
1884, June	The Suakin-Berber Railway.
1885, October	The Nordenfelt Submarine Boat.
1886, July	Invisibility.
1887, February	The Franco-German Frontier.
1888, May	The Higher Policy of Defence.
1891, October	Moltke.
" December	The Administration of the War Office.
1894, September	The War in the East.
1897, June	Nelson.
" November	Our Military Requirements.
1898, August	The Spanish-American War.
1899, August	The Limitations of Naval Force.
" "	The Intercepted Correspondence of the French in Egypt.
1900, December	Organization of the Army.
1901, February	Training of the Army.
" October	The Staff and the Army.
[1904, March	Report of Esher Committee.]
1913, October	Warship Design.
" December	Indian Nationalism.
1915, December	The Blockade of Germany (Speech).
1918, March	The Peril of Socialism.
" August	The Montagu-Chelmsford Report (Speech).
1919, June	Science and Labour Unrest (Speech).
1920, July	The League of Nations (Speech).
1921, January	Trade with Soviet Russia.
" June	A Great Lesson of the Naval War.
1923, May	The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms in Theory and Practice.



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**PART I**  
**WAR**





# I

## NELSON

(“*Nineteenth Century*,” June, 1897.)

As a master of the art of war at sea, as a great patriot and as a sane Imperialist, Nelson always powerfully appealed to my imagination. I learned much from him, and I have written copiously with the hope of enforcing the lessons which he bequeathed to the nation. His *Life* by my friend Captain (afterwards Rear-Admiral) A. T. Mahan, U.S.N., though excellent in many respects, did not wholly satisfy me, and I wrote this article to point out some blemishes, but also with the object of trying again to bring into relief the salient features in the career and the character of our greatest seaman. In these days, when the instruments of war on the sea have been revolutionised, while the great principles remain unchanged and unchangeable, there are plain signs that the teaching and the spirit of Nelson—our proud inheritance—are in danger of being forgotten, and I recall them as the only sure guides to our national security.

“ONE never knows,” wrote Catherine II on 13 January, 1791, to Grimm, “if you are still alive in the midst of the murders, carnage, and uproar of the cave of brigands who have seized the reins of government in France and will soon reduce it to the state of Gaul at the time of Cæsar. But Cæsar put down the brigands in Gaul. When will a Cæsar arise in France? Oh, come he will, you need not doubt.”

These words were strikingly prophetic. Less than five years later a young Corsican artillery officer of twenty-six scattered the National Guards in the streets of Paris, and, having restored the waning authority of the Convention, was appointed second-in-command of the Army

of the Interior. In the following year (1796), as Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Italy, he defeated the Austrians, reduced the King of Sardinia to vassalage, occupied Milan, and shut up the veteran Wurmser in Mantua. "Cæsar" had come to rule the destinies of France for eighteen years, to overturn the entire system of Europe, and to prove himself the greatest master of the art of land warfare that the world has known.

In 1793, a British post-captain of thirty-five sailed into the Mediterranean in command of H.M.S. *Agamemnon*, to enter upon a career of twelve years, which ended in the hour of his most glorious victory, and won for him undying fame as the most brilliant seaman whom the greatest of maritime nations has ever produced.

As Napoleon was the highest incarnation of the power of the land and of the military aptitude of the French people, so was Nelson the supreme exponent of the power of the sea and the embodiment of the naval genius of the Anglo-Saxon race. Fate ordained that the careers of these two should violently clash, and that the vast ambitions of the one should be shattered by the untiring energy of the other. The war which began in 1793 was in effect a tremendous conflict between the forces of the land and those of the sea, each directed by a master hand and each fed by the resources of a great nation. The apparent inequality of conditions was considerable at the outset, and later overwhelming. Conquered or overawed by the power of the land, the allies of England fell away, becoming the instruments of Napoleon's policy, till the small island State stood alone. There was no outpouring of wild enthusiasm such as carried the armies of revolutionary France from victory to victory; but, instead, a stern determination to uphold the cause of order and of real liberty in the face of all odds, and in spite of much real suffering. With the ultimate triumph, won upon the sea, the name of Nelson will for ever be associated. It is

his immortal honour not only to have stepped forth as the champion of his country in the hour of dire need, but to have bequeathed to her the knowledge in which lies her only salvation.

Captain Mahan's *Life of Nelson*<sup>1</sup> is far more than the story of an heroic career. It is a picture, drawn in firm lines by a master hand, in which the significance of the events chronicled stands out in true proportion. Nelson's place in history, his mission as the great opponent of the spirit of aggression, of which the French Revolution was the inspiring force and Napoleon the mighty instrument, and his final triumph, are traced with infinite skill and inexorable analysis.

"At each of the momentous crises, so far removed in time and place—at the Nile, at Copenhagen, at Trafalgar—as the unfolding drama of the age reveals to the on-looker the schemes of the arch-planner about to touch success, over against Napoleon rises ever Nelson; and as the latter in the hour of victory drops from the stage where he has played so chief a part, his task is seen to be accomplished, his triumph secured. In the very act of dying he has dealt his foe a blow from which recovery is impossible. Moscow and Waterloo are the inevitable consequences of Trafalgar."

In this passage the keynote of the book rings out clearly. We knew that the author of *The Influence of Sea Power* would place before us this aspect of Nelson's career as it has never yet been presented, that no writer of the present or the past was so competent to deal with Nelson's achievements and to portray him as a director of war. We did not know whether the brilliant naval historian could assume the difficult rôle of the biographer, and could

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Nelson, the Embodiment of the Sea Power of Great Britain.* By Captain (afterwards Rear-Admiral) A. T. Mahan, D.C.L., LL.D., U.S. Navy. London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1897.

unveil a living image of the man of simple yet complex nature, of impulse, yet of cold reason. In some respects, at least, Captain Mahan's success in the more delicate portion of his task is complete. He has shown the gradual training of Nelson's mind in the school of experience. He has placed beyond the reach of cavil the fact of Nelson's genius, which a recent writer ventured to question, and he has rightly claimed for that genius in its maturity a wider range than the knowledge of the sea. Like his great antagonist, Nelson was something more than a born leader of fighting men, and both owed their success as directors of war to the insight which, when associated with self-reliance and readiness to accept responsibility, is the essence of real statesmanship. Captain Mahan is, however, not in the least carried away by an exaggerated hero-worship. It is evident that he is profoundly impressed by the personality of the man in whom sea power found its greatest exponent ; but he can be coldly—almost harshly—critical, and to the strain of human weakness, which mingled with but did not mar the closing years of Nelson's glorious career, he shows no excess of mercy. The aim "has been to make Nelson describe himself—tell the story of his own inner life as well as of his external actions," and, in the main, this course has been followed. If here and there the running personal comment—never the historical analysis—seems a little *fade*, and leads to unconscious repetitions, the book holds the reader from beginning to end.

It is remarkable that Nelson, though almost continuously afloat from 1770 till 1783, saw no naval action during the great war of American Independence. In this period, however, the foundations of his future greatness were laid. The opportunities were few, but none were lost. As a post-captain of twenty-two he took in 1780 a leading part in the siege and capture of Fort San Juan, near Lake Nicaragua, gaining experience to be

turned to full account in after years on the coast of Corsica. Of practical seamanship he became a master. He had shown marked independence of judgment, together with a certain restiveness under authority feebly or wrongfully wielded. In 1785, defying popular opinion in the West Indies, and disregarding the orders of the Rear-Admiral (which relieved him of responsibility), he enforced the Navigation Laws, and after much anxiety and vexation was upheld by the Admiralty. "This struggle with Sir Richard Hughes," states Captain Mahan, "showed clearly not only the loftiness of his motives, but the distinguishing features which constituted the strength of his character both civil and military." In 1788 Nelson returned to England with his newly-married wife, and being out of favour with the Court and the Admiralty for having openly shown his friendship for the Duke of Clarence, then attached to the party of the Prince of Wales, was unable to obtain a ship. His fearless assumption of responsibility in the West Indies, and the breadth of view which he displayed, had impressed both Pitt and Mr. Rose, the Secretary of the Treasury. Although, therefore, for the moment under a cloud, his strong self-reliance had already made its mark. "Even in the earlier stages of his profession," said Codrington, "his genius had soared higher, and all his energies were turned to becoming a great commander." Such men were sorely needed when, at the end of 1792, Pitt realized that war with Revolutionary France was inevitable, and on the 30th of January, 1793, Nelson was appointed to the sixty-four-gun ship *Agamemnon*. "The Admiralty," he wrote, "so smile upon me, that really I am as much surprised as when they frowned."

The three years which followed form "the period in which expectation passed into fulfilment, when development, being arrested, resumed its outward progress under the benign influence of a favourable environment." Nelson was fairly launched on his unparalleled career.

Nothing could be better than the author's treatment of the wonderful chapter of history which now opened. Here is no mere narrative of the actions of an individual, but a luminous exposition of war in which the interaction of the sea and land operations on a great scale is admirably traced. We are enabled to see the gradual establishment of order in a vast contest, which began with "no sound ideas," no vestige of a clear policy. And we can follow the rapid development of Nelson's genius maturing through rich experience, his reason correcting his impulse, and his powers as a director of war rising to meet the ever-increasing demands which they were called upon to meet. Fortune was now propitious. In Lord Hood, Nelson found a commander-in-chief who recognized his special capacity for "separate and responsible service." Henceforth, till the battle of the Nile, his "life presents a series of detached commands, independent as regarded the local scene of operations," and exactly calculated to furnish the scope and the opportunities for which he craved.

The abandonment of Toulon—due chiefly to the intervention of Napoleon—in December, 1793, left the Mediterranean fleet without a harbour east of Gibraltar. Naval warfare in sailing days demanded the use of harbours quite as much as when coaling stations came to be a new requirement. Corsica, held by a French garrison, appeared to offer the necessary facilities, and on Nelson's advice, in opposition to the opinion of General Dundas, the siege of Bastia was undertaken. "If the Army will not take it," he wrote, "we must, by some way or other," and he both planned the siege and directed the operations to a successful conclusion (May, 1794). At this juncture a French squadron sailed from Toulon, and Vice-Admiral Hotham, commanding an equal force, fell back towards Corsica, missing a great opportunity, as Nelson instantly recognized. Hood, concentrating his fleet, was unable

to bring the enemy to action, but effectually covered the siege of Calvi, where Nelson lost the use of his right eye when directing the fire of the batteries on shore, whose construction he had advised. Corsica was now "unassailable" by the enemy, as Captain Mahan states, so long as the sea was controlled by the British Navy; but Nelson had not as yet realized the impossibility of over-sea operations in face of naval supremacy, and evinced traces of the same anxiety which later he felt for Sicily. In the memorable action of the *Agamemnon* and *Ça Ira* on the 13th of March, 1795—his first sea fight—Nelson unmistakably showed "the spirit which takes a man to the front, not merely in battle but at all times." The difference between his bold initiative on this day and the decision instantly acted upon at St. Vincent was only one of degree. So also when, on the following day, Hotham rested satisfied with a temporary advantage, Nelson pleaded for a pursuit of the French fleet. There was risk, as the author shows, but in the circumstances it was a risk which ought to have been accepted. On the 13th of July, another chance presented itself to Hotham, but the signal for a general chase was delayed "pending certain drill-ground manœuvres," and the French lost only one ship.

This naval campaign, successful only in the sense that captures were made, supplied object lessons which Nelson took to heart. The French fleet was not crippled, and Captain Mahan, who elsewhere seems to question the deterrent effect of a fleet "in being," remarks: "How keep the fleet on the Italian coast, while the French fleet remained in Toulon? What a curb it was appeared again in the next campaign, and even more clearly, because the British were then commanded by Sir John Jervis, a man not to be checked by ordinary obstacles." Controversy has raged over this point, and unfortunately the disputants will each be able to claim the author as an ally. The inconsistency is perhaps more apparent than real, for the



records of naval war conclusively show that an effective fleet—a fleet at sea or ready to sail and handled by fighting seamen—is a most powerful deterrent to naval operations and especially to the over-sea transport of military forces.

In the chapters dealing with Nelson's proceedings on the Riviera in 1795 and 1796 Captain Mahan discusses with much ability the possibilities of bringing sea power to bear on the land campaign. Nelson's plan for landing 5,000 men at San Remo on the French line of communications with Nice was not justified under the existing conditions. It was eminently characteristic of his marked capacity for seizing upon the decisive factor in a given situation; but "his accurate instinct that war cannot be made without running risks combined with his lack of experience in the difficulties of land operations to mislead his judgment in this particular instance." In 1796 Napoleon was launched on a full tide of victory; Spain declared war on us; Corsica rose against the English garrison; and on the 25th of September, 1796, orders were received by Jervis to quit the Mediterranean. By Nelson this decision was bitterly resented. "I lament our present orders in sackcloth and ashes, so dishonourable to the dignity of England." His earlier view had changed, and, realising all that the evacuation implied, his mind dwelt upon the advantages of a bold offensive on the sea. "The fleets of England are equal to meet the world in arms." The defection of Rear-Admiral Man, who, against the Admiralty's orders, had not joined Jervis but had returned to England, left Jervis, however, in a position of great numerical inferiority. The enemy fleet in being, already a heavy "curb," now amounted, with the addition of the Spanish squadron, to thirty-four sail of the line. It was natural that the British Government should consider the odds too great.

To Nelson these three years were of the utmost importance. His mind, continually occupied in solving naval

problems, in forecasting events, and in studying the European situation, underwent rapid development. His exploits on a minor stage had been remarkable, and, as Captain Mahan justly points out, the brilliant achievements which followed ought not to be permitted to obscure "the long antecedent period of unswerving continuance in strenuous action, allowing no flagging of earnestness for a moment to appear, no chance for service, however small or distant, to pass unimproved." It is the great merit of the author to have thrown a strong light upon this period, far less dramatic than that which followed, but essential to a right understanding of the secret of Nelson's transcendent success as a naval commander.

Sent back into the Mediterranean in December, 1796, with two frigates to evacuate Elba, Nelson accomplished his task; and after fighting two actions, escaping his pursuers by an act of splendid daring, and sailing through a night in company with the Spanish fleet, he joined (13 February, 1797) Jervis the day before the battle of St. Vincent. The well-known story is lucidly retold, and the diagrams enable the unprofessional reader to grasp the situation. The British fleet in single column was tacking in succession to follow the Spanish main body, when the great chance presented itself to the captains of the rear ships to choose the chord instead of the arc, throw over the formal movement, wear out of line, and head off the enemy.<sup>1</sup> Nelson instantly seized this chance and determined the course of the battle, arresting the Spanish movement, and boarding the *San Nicolas* and *San Josef*. There was risk of being overwhelmed before support could arrive; there was the further risk which attached to an act undertaken without authority and in defiance of an ordered evolution; but Captain Mahan justly considers that in any case Nelson would have been upheld by an

<sup>1</sup> This movement is prescribed in Clerk of Eldin's "Naval Tactics," which Nelson had probably studied.

admiral "who had just fought twenty-seven ships of the line with fifteen because 'a victory was essential to England at that moment.'"

On this signal success quickly followed a "sharp reverse" in the failure of the attack on Santa Cruz, Teneriffe (July, 1797). This was essentially a task in which military forces ought to have been employed, as Nelson originally proposed, and the lesson is important. The loss of his right arm and the months of suffering which followed brought temporary despondency, which disappeared when at length the wound healed. On the 10th of April, 1798, Nelson sailed in the *Vanguard* to rejoin the fleet under Jervis, now Lord St. Vincent, off Cadiz, and to enter upon what Captain Mahan regards as the second period of his career. "Before him was now to open a field of possibilities hitherto unexampled in naval warfare; and for the appreciation of them was needed just those perceptions, intuitive in origin, yet resting firmly on well-ordered, rational processes which, on the intellectual side, distinguished him above all other British seamen."

The political situation demanded the resumption of a naval offensive in the Mediterranean, where a great French expedition was known to be preparing. "If," wrote Lord Spencer to St. Vincent, "by our appearance in the Mediterranean, we can encourage Austria to come forward again, it is in the highest degree probable that the other powers will seize the opportunity of acting at the same time." The measure was correctly conceived, and Nelson was the instrument selected by the Cabinet to carry it out. At last in sole command of a considerable force, he entered the Mediterranean with a detachment from St. Vincent's fleet.

With the greatest skill Captain Mahan re-tells the story of the famous chase of Napoleon's fleet and transports from the 7th of June to the memorable 1st of August, 1798. We are made to share Nelson's anxieties and

difficulties, to follow the workings of his mind, and to realise the inflexible steadiness of purpose which at length led him to his goal. Neither England nor Nelson himself at first recognised the tremendous importance of the battle of the Nile. French designs in Egypt and in the Far East were checkmated; Minorca fell; the fate of Malta was decided; and a new alliance, joined by Russia and Turkey, was arrayed against the forces of the Revolution. Meanwhile Nelson, severely wounded and suffering greatly, sailed for Naples, there to meet Lady Hamilton, who from this period till the hour of his death dominated his affections.

No biographer can ignore the influence which this woman henceforth exercised over Nelson's private life. The later breach with his wife, and the intimacy which he publicly avowed, have rendered the discussion of this phase of his career inevitable. The name of Lady Hamilton must always be associated with that of Nelson.

It was, however, the manner and not the fact of his liaison that imposes upon the biographer the duty of referring to it in his pages. The lives of many other great men—lives grossly impure compared with that of Nelson—escape this form of investigation. We do not, in their case, pause to inquire how far some woman's influence may have swayed their actions, or seek to frame theories of their moral deterioration. Captain Mahan appears to forget that the special circumstances which invested Nelson's human weakness with inevitable publicity constitute a strong plea against exaggeration of treatment. Nelson lived forty-seven years, into less than seven of which Lady Hamilton enters. Yet throughout these two large volumes we are continually bidden to remember that a period of moral decline is impending, and the inwoven strain of reflections is somewhat irritating. Until Nelson sinned, we prefer to think of him as blameless. In the years during which his whole nature is assumed to

have been warped, his most splendid services to his country were rendered, and great victories won, and there is no valid evidence that the influence of Lady Hamilton drew him aside from his public duties. Captain Mahan does not follow Admiral Jurien de la Gravière in ascribing the execution of Carracciolo to that influence, but holds that Nelson, in not delaying the execution, showed that he was "saturated with the prevalent Court feeling against the insurgents and the French." To us, living a hundred years after the reign of murder in France, it is not easy to realise the feelings with which Revolutionists were naturally regarded in 1799, and the crime for which Carracciolo was justly condemned would have aroused the strongest opprobrium in Nelson even if he had never known Marie-Antoinette's sister, the Queen of Naples. Motives are usually complex, and it is not necessary to assume that his disobedience of the orders of Lord Keith was prompted by reluctance to leave Lady Hamilton. Nelson was not on good terms with his commander-in-chief, whose judgment he distrusted, and whose instructions, addressed from a dull pupil to a master, he resented. Moreover, it is certain that before he had seen Lady Hamilton, as well as long after she had returned to England, he, rightly or wrongly, attached special importance to the security of the Two Sicilies. The disobedience cannot be condoned; but unquestionably it did not prejudice the interests of England, and the real moral is the unwisdom of subjecting genius to mediocrity in order to comply with the dictates of petty routine. Nelson was marked out for command in the Mediterranean in succession to St. Vincent, and in sending out Keith the Government and the Admiralty made a grave mistake, from which the national cause suffered. In the ten months of temporary independence (August, 1799, to June, 1800) which followed Keith's departure for England, Nelson showed no sign whatever of diminished energy. His

brief "administration of the station until Keith's return was characterised by the same zeal, sagacity, and politic tact that he had shown in earlier days." A second disappointment—the more bitterly felt since Keith, after having lost touch with the French fleet, was sent back—and an Admiralty reprimand, which, though deserved, caused Nelson much pain, sufficiently explain his "testiness" at this time. Growing infatuation for Lady Hamilton there may have been; but if St. Vincent had remained, or if Nelson had succeeded to the command, it would have been unnoticed. When, after only four months in England, Nelson sailed for the Baltic, his fiery energy at once displayed itself, and we find no signs of an inordinate craving to linger by the side of Lady Hamilton. And when at last the brief peace came, Captain Mahan assures us that, "like Great Britain herself during this repose, he rested with his arms at his side, waiting for a call." There is no proof that his duty to his country and his king suffered from the one great passion, the one great weakness of his life.

Captain Mahan is undoubtedly right in not investing the hero's frailty with a halo of romance; but he has perhaps tended towards the opposite extreme and sought to depict a somewhat squalid amour. Nelson spent the greater part of his life at sea and knew little of women. He was capable of a devoted affection, which his wife at no time inspired. There were signs of incompatibility of temperament before another image engrossed his thoughts. That image was doubtless unworthy, but can scarcely have been so inadequate as it is represented in the spiteful reminiscences of Mrs. St. George. Emma Hart was what men had made her; but to deny all moral sense to the writer of the touching letters to Greville appears unjust. Of her cleverness there is no question; her beauty is beyond dispute; that she was incapable of returning the deep affection she inspired is not certain. And

Captain Mahan, in spite of his evidently opposite intention, conveys a dim impression that the mistress was better able to understand the heroic side of Nelson's character than the blameless wife whose sad fate evokes our sympathy. "Such things are," as Nelson was wont to say in regard to the anomalies of life, and such things unhappily will be, so long as humanity retains its many imperfections.

The coalition formed after the battle of the Nile proved short-lived. Napoleon, whose escape from Egypt Nelson "sincerely regretted," landed in France in October, 1799, and Austria, struck down by repeated blows, made peace after Hohenlinden. Catherine II was dead, and the Tsar Paul, easily cajoled by Napoleon, revived the armed neutrality to which Sweden, Denmark, and Prussia at once acceded. Great Britain stood almost alone. The new combination was, as the author points out, the work of Napoleon, who sought to employ the Northern navies to his advantage, and at the same time "to exclude Great Britain from her important commerce with the Continent, which was carried on mainly by the ports of Prussia or by those of North Germany."

Again Nelson stands forth as the national champion. "We have now arrived at that period," he wrote, "what we have often heard of but must now execute—that of fighting for our dear country. . . . I have only to say . . . that the service of my country is the object nearest my heart." The astounding blunder of giving the chief command of the Baltic fleet to Sir Hyde Parker was, in the opinion of Admiral Jurien de la Gravière, due to a perception of "the propriety of placing under the control of some more temperate, docile, and matured mind, that impetuous, daring, and brilliant courage whose caprices" the Admiralty "had learned to dread." Captain Mahan suggests, with greater probability, that the reason may be sought in Parker's possession of "the information acquired

during the last preparation for a Russian war." The arrangement was one of which this country furnishes many examples ; but in this case the national cause suffered no injury. Denmark—not Great Britain—paid heavily for the appointment of Sir Hyde Parker. "Nelson's understanding of the situation," states Captain Mahan, "was, in truth, acute, profound, and decisive. In the Northern combination . . . Paul was the trunk, Denmark and Sweden the branches. Could he get at the trunk and hew it down, the branches fall with it ; but should time and strength first be spent in lopping off the branches, the trunk would remain, and 'my power must be weaker when its greatest strength is required.'"

To strike straight at the Russian squadron at Revel—clearly the right policy—was a course which did not commend itself to Parker ; and Nelson, perforce yielding to his titular superior, addressed himself to the subsidiary task of attacking the Danish fleet in the roads of Copenhagen. The plan which he proposed shows similarity to that executed at the Nile, but with an important difference. In the earlier case, a general idea was given to all the captains, to whom the details of the execution were left. In the later, the instructions were singularly careful and elaborate, aptly illustrating the completeness of Nelson's genius. The battle of the 2nd of April, 1801, was an exhibition of seamanship finely conceived, as well as of fighting power, and the share of the commander-in-chief was practically limited to making a signal which might have wrecked the whole scheme. Captain Mahan shows that Nelson, in applying his telescope to the blind eye, was not, as has been represented, acting a little comedy. The frigates obeyed this "remarkable" signal, and Rear-Admiral Graves, "not being able to distinguish the *Elephant's*<sup>1</sup> conduct," repeated it, but happily did not haul down No. 16, signifying "Close action," the order

<sup>1</sup> Nelson's flagship.



given by Nelson. As the author pointedly remarks, "The man who went into the Copenhagen fight with an eye upon withdrawing from action would have been beaten before he began."

One branch of the Northern Alliance having been lopped off, Nelson, who had brought on an illness by exposure for six hours in an open boat when rejoining his flagship, was intensely anxious to fight the Russians. The assassination of the Tsar Paul had, however, changed the situation, and when the fleet, under Nelson's command, sailed for Revel the moment Sir Hyde Parker departed, Russia could no longer be regarded as a belligerent. The Baltic campaign had ended; "there was nothing left to do"; and considering how Nelson's life had been passed for eight years, the severe wounds he had received, and the suffering caused by the keen air of the north, the longing for rest which he evinced was, apart from the "unquenchable passion for Lady Hamilton," surely natural. Landing in England on the 1st of July, he again hoisted his flag on the 26th in command of a "Particular Service Squadron," having previously drawn up what he called "a sea plan of defence for the City of London."

Whatever may have been the reality of Napoleon's preparations for the invasion of England in 1805, those of 1801 were undoubtedly undertaken with the object of working upon the fears of the persons whom St. Vincent accurately described as "the old women of both sexes." While, therefore, Nelson threw himself with characteristic energy into the organisation of a defensive flotilla, his opinion changed as soon as he had obtained an insight into the situation. "Where is our invasion to come from? The time is gone," he wrote on the 12th of August.

From October, 1801, to May, 1803, Nelson lived with the Hamiltons at Merton, "resolute in braving" the opinion of society; but, according to the testimony of

the daughter of the vicar, "setting such an example of propriety and regularity that there are few who would not be benefited by following it." His generosity to the poor of the parish was unbounded, and he showed equal solicitude for the welfare of the tenants on his Sicilian estate. Nor did the alleged baneful influence of Lady Hamilton destroy his interest in public matters, although his representations on the questions of manning, desertion, and prize-money appear to have received no consideration from the Admiralty, then engrossed in economies, soon to prove gravely injurious to the national cause.

The wonderful story of the Trafalgar campaign has already been admirably told by Captain Mahan<sup>1</sup>; but this later version, in which the heroic personality of Nelson dominates the drama, possesses an added interest. As Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean, he sailed in the *Victory* on the 20th of May, 1805. "Government," he had written, "cannot be more anxious for my departure than I am, if a war, to go." In this spirit Nelson entered upon the crowning period of his career—a period in which the wide experience of the past was to bear rich fruit, and the sterling qualities of the greatest of seamen were to shine forth in full splendour. Through the long and anxious cruising in the Mediterranean, the chase of Villeneuve to and from the West Indies, and the brief sojourn in England, down to the triumph at Trafalgar, Captain Mahan leads the reader in pages whose luminous analysis leaves nothing to be desired. The naval aspects of each phase of the tremendous drama are grasped with a firm hand. Nelson's steady concentration of purpose upon the primary object—the enemy's fleet—his determination to keep his own ships at sea, thus maintaining the officers and crews in fullest fighting efficiency, and the wise administration by which he won the love and confidence of

<sup>1</sup> *The Influence of Sea Power on the Wars of the French Revolution and Empire.*

his command, supply lessons for all time. The causes of the victory of Trafalgar lie deeper than either strategy or tactics. They may be traced in the life of Nelson ; they may be reproduced by following the example he has left.

From beginning to end the Trafalgar campaign abounds in pregnant lessons which are only now beginning to be understood. Assuming that the immense preparations on the French coast were seriously intended for an invasion, Napoleon's correct perception of the risks was plainly shown. He might, as Captain Mahan intimates, be willing to sacrifice an army to accomplish the occupation of London. "What if the soldiers of the Grand Army never returned from England? There were still in France men enough," etc. He was not willing, however, to encounter the tremendous danger of being caught in passage or in landing by the British Navy. His far-reaching plans were directed to the concentration of a superior force in the Channel, during a period which he variously estimated at six hours, fifteen days, and two months. He does not, however, appear to have realised that this concentration could not have been effected without hard fighting, which must inevitably have changed the whole situation. Nor did he understand that his harbour-trained ships were no match for their weather-beaten opponents. Provided that the British blockading squadrons would have quietly withdrawn into space when threatened by superior numbers, the over-elaborate scheme might have succeeded. But this is exactly what could not reasonably be expected. On the arrival of Villeneuve from the West Indies to relieve the blockaded ships, the blockaders would have moved up Channel, gathering strength, and being joined by the considerable free force which is usually left out of account. There would then have been a real "fleet in being"—a fighting fleet numerically not far inferior to that which Napoleon vainly hoped to assemble, and in all other respects vastly

superior. At best a victory could have been obtained only at immense sacrifice, by which the French would have been crippled, while a fresh British squadron under Nelson must have been near at hand. Calder's action, incomplete as it was, showed the moral ascendancy which rendered it certain that the French would in any case be attacked, and Nelson's words to his captains have a special significance: "If we meet the enemy we shall find them not less than eighteen, I rather think twenty, sail of the line<sup>1</sup>; do not be surprised if I should not fall on them immediately—we won't part without a battle." The idea, frequently put forward, that England narrowly escaped invasion in 1805 has no foundation in reason or in fact.

On the other hand, it is remarkable that neither the British Government nor Nelson himself seems to have realised that, if Napoleon was really bent upon crossing the Channel, the movement of the Toulon squadron must have been directly connected with the project. Nelson did not live long enough to understand how deeply the lesson of 1798 had been graven on the mind of his antagonist, who, with a great object in view, was not in the least likely to contemplate an eccentric operation of any magnitude, such as a re-invasion of Egypt. In any case, Nelson's conduct of the Trafalgar campaign was based throughout upon sound principles of naval war, and his success was amply deserved. Trafalgar did not, as is frequently asserted, save England from invasion; but the results were of vital importance. On the sea the aims of Napoleon were finally shattered. Henceforth, abandoning his hopes of invasion, he sought in vain to conquer the sea by the land. The Peninsular War, Moscow, Elba, Waterloo, and St. Helena marked the inexorable series of events which sprang from Nelson's last victory. To Great Britain Trafalgar implied the means of expansion,

<sup>1</sup> Nelson had eleven sail of the line.

the firm foundation of the present Colonial Empire, and naval prestige which still endures. The complexity of concurrent causes, by which, at a national crisis, the scale was turned in favour of this country, baffles analysis ; but to Nelson, above all his contemporaries, honour is due.

It is Captain Mahan's great merit to have shown clearly that Nelson was far more than a fighting seaman. The great principle, that the offensive *rôle* was essential to the British Navy, dominated his actions. In 1795 he writes : "I have no doubt but that, if we can get close to the enemy, we shall defeat any plan of theirs ; but we ought to have our ideas beyond mere defensive measures." He fully understood that, in certain circumstances, the loss of a squadron would be justified if the enemy's project could thereby be thwarted. When awaiting the incursion of Bruix into the Mediterranean, by which the British fleet would be placed in a position of great numerical inferiority, he thus writes to St. Vincent : "Your lordship may depend that the squadron under my command shall never fall into the hands of the enemy ; and, before we are destroyed, I have little doubt but that the enemy will have their wings so clipped that they may be easily overtaken." No one ever more perfectly grasped the fact that risks must be taken in war ; no one certainly was ever more willing to take risks for a sufficient object. Yet Nelson, when determined to fight, left nothing to chance, never neglected details, willingly accepted counsel, while never for a moment evading responsibility, and was particularly careful in imparting his views to his captains.

A rare combination of qualities is thus implied. Captain Mahan sums up these qualities as follows : "For success in war, the indispensable complement of intellectual grasp and insight is a moral power, which enables a man to trust the inner light—to have faith—a power which dominates hesitation and sustains action in the most tremendous emergencies." These qualities—rare in due

combination—met in Nelson, and “their coincidence with the exceptional opportunities afforded him constituted his good fortune and his greatness.” One other quality is, however, essential to a great commander—the power of winning the love of his subordinates and so of obtaining their best services. This also Nelson possessed in a marked degree. Restive under incompetent superiors, he was always thoughtful of the welfare of his inferiors. The man who, just before Trafalgar, recalled the mail by signal because a petty officer of the *Victory* had omitted to post a letter to his wife, and who refused to give to his valued friend the command of a seventy-four because it would rob a lieutenant of coming honour—“No, Blackwood, it is these men’s birthright, and they shall have it”—could count upon the loyal support which never failed him in the hour of battle.

Captain Mahan has given us incomparably the best life of Nelson that has yet appeared. No other writer could have paid so worthy a tribute to the greatest director of naval war—a tribute which gains in force because of its evident spontaneity. To the British nation the value of this book cannot be overrated. The principles which guided Nelson to victory are eternal; the qualities he displayed have now a far wider scope than in his day. For rapidity and certainty of movement favour the offensive, and, by conferring a vast increase of possibilities, distinctly enhance the importance of the personal factor. Nelson was the most brilliant exponent alike of a national policy and a national spirit. If we cling to the one and keep alive the other, the unknown future can be calmly awaited.

## II

# THE INTERCEPTED CORRESPONDENCE OF THE FRENCH IN EGYPT

*(United Service Magazine, August, 1899.)*

I came across this little-known correspondence by chance, and it seemed to throw a strong light upon the direct and indirect results of Nelson's great victory of the Nile. These letters are human documents of real historical value. Some of them show true insight into the future; others reveal the inmost thoughts of the victims of one of Napoleon's greatest blunders, due to his customary ignorance of the laws of the sea. They illustrate French character in certain pleasing aspects. Incidentally, their publication may be regarded as an early and a peculiarly futile example of Government propaganda highly developed in our times. For these reasons, I have resuscitated my article, more than twenty-eight years old, as forming a fitting sequel to the story of Nelson's career.

THERE is no more accurate gauge of the condition or a force engaged in military operations than private letters conveying the daily impressions of the officers and men and written solely for the information of wives and friends at home. On such letters rather than on the despatches of commanders will the historian prefer to rely; but they are rarely available, and there is probably only a single instance of a collected correspondence, the unconscious testimony of many writers of varied rank and capacity, covering a peculiarly interesting period.

When, after the battle of the Nile, Bonaparte's hapless expedition was imprisoned at the far end of the Mediterranean, a mass of correspondence intended for France was captured by British and Turkish frigates. It seems

to have been decided by the Government of Pitt to publish a selection from those papers, and they appeared, with translations, in three successive parts during the years 1798-1800. This decision, which appears utterly indefensible, must have been regarded by the French as a conclusive proof of the engrained perfidiousness of Albion, but the result is a book intensely interesting to the student of history and of men. From 1798 the Egyptian aspirations of the French date. Here are their unvarnished first impressions of the land of the Pharaohs. In 1798 the Delta was overrun by a French army. To-day it lies in the hollow of the hand of England, and is awakening to freedom and prosperity unknown in its long history. The great changes wrought by the hand of time in less than a century are powerfully emphasised by a study of "The Intercepted Correspondence."

An anonymous editor, whether official or otherwise is not clear, was provided to supply the part of the Greek chorus, to wail at frequent intervals over the depravity of the French and to supply copious running comments of a depreciatory nature which the text does not by any means justify. "The correspondence," he tells us, "would have remained a secret, had not the French, by holding out, first, a false account of the motive of this famous expedition, and then, by spreading the most absurd and exaggerated accounts of its success, rendered it necessary to undeceive Europe (still trembling at the tale) by proving from their own statements that what began in wickedness and fraud was likely to terminate in wretchedness and despair." The "motive," we are given to understand, arose out of "the difficulties of the Directory," who could not find the arrears of pay due to the army of Italy, and who projected an invasion of Egypt "as an excellent expedient for quieting the present clamour and providing for 40,000 veteran troops inured to plunder and impatient of control." There is, however, no doubt that



Bonaparte cherished vague dreams of founding an Eastern Empire, and in any case he clearly recognised the future importance of Egypt. Unfortunately for France, he did not understand that, while the capture of Egypt would be an easy task if the British fleet could be evaded, the ultimate fate of the expedition must depend absolutely upon the command of the sea which the French could not hope to assert. The tragedy which followed is a lesson for all time. How imperfectly it has been learned in this country frequently appears in our handling of questions of national defence. The effect of the battle of the Nile throughout Europe was electric, and any "absurd and exaggerated accounts" of success sent by Bonaparte for French consumption must have been effectually annulled as soon as the news arrived. Altogether the excuses for the publication put forward by the editor seem remarkably feeble, and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Government hoped by this means to stir up animosity against the French. Although the two nations had been at war for five years, there was in this country a considerable body of French sympathisers, and the editor pointedly alludes to "the ignorant and malevolent," whom he apparently sought to enlighten or convert, while he heavily belabours the *Morning Chronicle* for protesting against the publication.

The letters show extreme ignorance of Egypt. The "*savans*" who, according to Berthier, "fought with the greatest courage," were as devoid of all information as the military chiefs. Bitter disappointment in regard to the resources of the country constantly peep out. An anonymous "*savan*" writes :

"Savary has deceived us all with respect to Egypt. It is not the charming country of which he boasts so much, nor that balsamic dew that is drawn in with the morning air. It is the country of misery. Its inhabitants are

savages who have, in every respect, incurred the disgrace of nature."

Vivid pictures of the squalor and misery of the native villages and even of Alexandria and Cairo abound. We trace the painful disillusionment of an army which had expected to find another Italy by the banks of the Nile.

"When we first got sight of Alexandria and the deserts which surround it, both officers and men were struck with consternation. Bonaparte has revived their spirits."—*Jaubert to the Minister of Marine.*

Allusions to the British fleet appear from time to time before the catastrophe; but there are few signs of any realisation of the frightful peril which the expedition incurred. Louis Bonaparte, however, tells his brother Joseph that Nelson's squadron was sighted by the *Justice* after the enemy left Malta.

"Yet it had the awkwardness or the stupidity to miss us! It required, I think, no common degree of courage and good fortune to run through a numerous fleet, with inferior forces . . . and to capture on our passage, partly by force and partly by negotiation, such an important place as Malta."

The "good fortune" is evident since, if Nelson's frigates had not returned to Gibraltar, Bonaparte would never have seen Egypt; but the successful evasion was dangerously delusive. The departure of the British fleet from Alexandria before the arrival of the expedition gave rise to further misapprehensions. On the 12th July, 1798, Vice-Admiral Brueys wrote to the Minister of Marine:

"I have heard nothing further of the English. They are gone, perhaps, to look for us on the coast of Syria;

or rather (and this is my private opinion) they have not so many as 14 sail of the line, and finding themselves not superior in numbers do not think it quite prudent to try their strength with us."

How little did the French admiral know Nelson, who at this very time was writing to Lord St. Vincent: "If they are above water, I will find them out and if possible bring them to action." Later, after the fateful 1st August, Rear-Admiral Ganteaume admits, in a letter to the Minister of Marine, that:

"The conduct (of Nelson's fleet) which had not waited for us before Alexandria . . . unhappily confirmed us in the opinion that it had no order to attack us and produced a boundless and fatal sense of security."

With the short march from Marabout to Alexandria the troubles of the French troops began, and it is clear that the expedition was lacking in all the requirements of desert warfare. The capture of Alexandria dwindles into a paltry affair in the candid letter of Adjutant-General Boyer who says that 22,000 men were employed in the assault of a place defended by 500 "Janizzaries, of whom scarce a man knew how to level a musket." From Alexandria Bonaparte hastened on to Cairo and the correspondence teems with accounts of the terrible sufferings endured by the troops.

"We were many days without water, or bread, or victuals of any kind, and even without the means of procuring any. In five or six days, I speak without exaggeration, we lost six or seven hundred men by thirst alone. . . . We are exceedingly reduced in our numbers. . . . We have had several soldiers who blew out their brains in the presence of the Commander-in-Chief calling out to him '*Voilà ton ouvrage.*'"—Captain Rozés.

“I must now tell you that it is hardly possible to form an idea of what we have gone through—sufferings upon sufferings, privations, mortifications, fatigues—we have exhausted them all. Three-fourths of the time we have been dying of hunger.”—*Colbert to Collasse.*

The Battle of the Pyramids, upon which in Bonaparte’s magniloquent language forty centuries looked down, is shorn of its glories and reduced to modest dimensions by these artless narrators.

“Our entrance into Grand Cairo will doubtless excite that sensation at home which every extraordinary event is calculated to produce; but when you come to know the kind of enemy we had to combat, the little art they employed against us and the perfect nullity of all their measures, our expedition and our victories will appear to you very ordinary things.”—*Adjutant-General Boyer.*

“We had an engagement the day we arrived in the neighbourhood of Cairo. . . . We call it the Battle of the Pyramids; the enemy lost (to speak without exaggeration) some seven or eight hundred men; a great portion perished in attempting to swim the Nile.”—*Damas to Kléber.*

“We have had two battles and three or four skirmishes, or rather we have had but two butcheries. The Mamelukes had nothing but bravery; we had discipline and experience. They rushed on to dash themselves in pieces against our squared battalions; their unreflecting valour precipitated them between two of these formidable masses, where they found their graves.”—*Adjutant-General Lacuée.*

Of the Battle of the Nile there are interesting details, and three eye-witnesses—two at Rosetta and one at Alexandria—narrate hour by hour what they saw of the fight. Here is a vivid piece of description written by François to his wife. The letter was begun on the 30th July, and asks: “And the English—will they keep the sea this

winter?" Two days later, the blow falls and the writer resumes his pen.

"Five o'clock.—We discern the English fleet very clearly with our glasses. It seems about to drop anchor in Aboukir Bay for the purpose of attacking us.

"Half after five.—The cannonade begins and about six increases.

"Seven.—It is now night and the fire still increases.

"Half after seven.—The whole horizon seems in flames; this shows that a ship is on fire.

"Eight.—The cannonade slackens a little.

"Nine.—The flames augment.

"A little after nine.—A vessel blows up. How tremendously beautiful! A sky covered with fire! . . .

"Noon (2nd August).—The express has arrived from Aboukir. O fatal night! O fatal action for the honour of France! The fleet is destroyed."

On the top of some old tower near Rosetta, another careful observer notes each phase of the great battle with wonderful accuracy, and returning to his post on the 3rd August, presents "an exact view of the whole scene as it appeared to us, keeping the town of Aboukir to the left, and directing our eyes along the horizon to the right."

"The first vessel dismasted carries English colours.

"The second and third are in good condition; colours not to be distinguished. The fourth has lost a mast."

Proceeding thus the panorama of stricken ships is completed.

Some few side lights on the causes of the disaster may be gleaned. As early as the 8th July, Commissary Jaubert tells us that it was the "general opinion" that the fleet would sail for Corfu and be reinforced by ships from Malta, Toulon and Ancona; but adds: "The general has decided otherwise."

"We shall certainly see it (the English fleet) at last ; but we are now disposed in such a manner as to bid defiance to a force more than double our own."

On the 12th July, Vice-Admiral Brueys writes to the Minister of Marine that he had been unable to find a channel into the port of Alexandria for the ships of the line, but still hoped to be successful in his search. Meanwhile, he had sent in the Venetian vessels and the light craft, and had disposed his ships at Aboukir, "the leading vessel being as close as possible to a shoal on the north-west." In this, as we know, he was mistaken, and Captain Foley in the *Goliath* followed by *Zealous*, *Orion*, *Theseus* and *Audacious* passed across the bows of "the leading vessel"—the *Guerrier*—between her and the shoal to which Brueys trusted to save his van from being turned.

Bonaparte subsequently stated that up to July 24, he believed that the French fleet had either sailed for Corfu or entered the harbour of Alexandria ; but, on the 27th July, he wrote to Brueys from Cairo :

"I hear from Alexandria that a channel, such as we could wish, has been discovered, and by this time, I flatter myself, you are already in port with all your fleet."

Rear-Admiral Ganteaume, however, in his report to the Minister of Marine on the Battle of the Nile, says :

"It would have been the most prudent step perhaps to have quitted the coast the moment the descent had been effected ; but the Admiral <sup>1</sup> who waited for the orders of the Commander-in-Chief, whose army naturally derived a great measure of confidence from the presence of the squadron, did not think himself justified in leaving the coast."

<sup>1</sup> Vice-Admiral Brueys, who was killed on board his flagship.

Traces of a certain jealousy between the navy and army are to be found, and one writer throws the whole blame upon Brueys.

“This catastrophe . . . could not have taken place, if the Admiral had been more anxious to execute his (Bonaparte’s) plans which were to carry all the ships into the port of Alexandria.”

In an appendix to his report, Ganteaume gives details of the ships and crews which, being in the harbour of Alexandria, escaped destruction. He enumerates ten ships of the line and frigates<sup>1</sup> with 3,453 men, and fourteen small craft with 1,495 men.

Writing on the 16th August, Bonaparte, with characteristic energy of purpose and ignorance of naval matters, was already planning impossible combinations. In a letter to Villeneuve, he states :

“The two ships of the line, *Le Causse* and *Le Dubois*, are manned and armed, as are the frigates *Junon*, *Alceste*, *Meuiron*, *Carrere*,<sup>2</sup> and all the other Venetian frigates. You will find at Malta two sail of the line and a frigate and you will await the arrival of three Venetian sail of the line and two frigates which are coming from Toulon. . . . My plan is to unite the three vessels which we have at Ancona, and that at Corfu with the two we have at the port of Alexandria, so that we may be able, at all events, to keep the Turkish squadrons in check, and thus to make an attempt to form a junction with the seven vessels which you will by this time have with you.”

All this reads very much like the complete plan of naval campaign which ended in disaster at Trafalgar. Thus

<sup>1</sup> The only ships of the line, so rated, were the Venetian vessels *Causse* and *Dubois*, which were in bad condition.

<sup>2</sup> *Cazzaro* in Ganteaume’s list.

early in his career, Bonaparte seems to have vainly fancied that he could effect naval combinations over great distances as easily as he could dispose troops for a great battle. One solitary soldier seems to have been unperturbed by the tremendous catastrophe of the battle of the Nile.

“The English, though victorious, are too much disabled to keep the sea, and will for some time, I flatter myself, leave our communications open.”—*Adjutant-General Lacuée*.

Other writers show that they fully comprehended the magnitude of the disaster, and foresaw the ruin of the expedition; but, here and there, the high spirit of the French nation asserts itself and belief in the power of Bonaparte to save the situation is not wanting. The army did not know that, as early as the 28th July, its Commander-in-Chief had written to his brother Joseph: “I think of being in France in two months.” It was not realised that he was capable of deserting the troops whom he had hopelessly compromised. Here are a few characteristic echoes of the battle of the Nile:

“The defeat of our fleet in the dreadful action of the 1st inst. is a calamity which leaves us here as children totally lost to the mother country. Nothing but peace can restore us to her. But, gracious heavens! how much will this incomparable victory raise the pretensions of the English! We are all pierced to the soul by it; but courage and Bonaparte still remain.”—*Le Père to his mother*.

“The action . . . would deprive the army of every hope, if it was not acquainted with the genius of the Commander-in-Chief. It is entirely on him that we rely for the care of extricating us from the perilous step in which we are engaged. May the measures he may take



bring us nearer to our country! This land is not made for us.”—*An anonymous “Savan.”*

“I set out to-morrow for Cairo to carry the news to Bonaparte. It will shock him so much the more, as he had not the least idea of its happening. . . . A glimmer of hope still remains; may it not vanish like the rest!”—*Tallien to Barras.*

“If I must needs speak the truth, such as it really appears to me, I then say that, after so dreadful a disaster, I conceive nothing but a peace can consolidate the establishment of our new colony. May our Government procure us a solid and honourable one!”—*Ganteaume to Minister of Marine.*

The following does honour to the writer :

“What a calamity, my dear friend, has befallen our fleet! It is dreadful in the extreme; but we must take heart and rise superior to our misfortunes.”—*Menou to Kléber.*

How heavily the sufferings of the march from Alexandria to Cairo, the cruel disillusionment produced by personal experience of the promised land of Egypt<sup>1</sup> and the fatal news from Aboukir had told upon the army can be imagined from the following extracts. It must not be forgotten that most of the officers present were not novices in war but tried soldiers of the Army of Italy. While the most striking characteristics of these letters are despair and deadly home-sickness, there are signs that the sense of duty had not been lost, and it must be remembered that the men who could thus write afterwards made the Syrian campaign under the most painful conditions.

<sup>1</sup> In his speech to the troops at Toulon before embarkation, Bonaparte had promised “to lead them, in the name of his Goddess of Liberty, across mighty seas and into regions where native valour might achieve such glory and wealth as could never be looked for beneath the cold skies of the West.” (*Editor of Correspondence.*)

"If we have the happiness of returning speedily to France, I will exert myself to the utmost to obtain my discharge at any time whatever. I can no longer endure this cursed business, always hazarding my life at every hour of the day."—*Captain Gay to his parents.*

"We are assured that in the course of a few months reinforcements from France will arrive here and that we shall then return home. . . . Sometimes, however, sad thoughts, bitter regrets force themselves upon me. A sign breaks forth, a tear trickles down my cheek and I hasten to tear myself from my melancholy reverie. O poor Charles! How art thou passing thy youth! O duty, why art thou so rigorous!"—*Lasalle to his mother.*

"My situation becomes every day more and more irksome. . . . Nothing however shall induce me to betray my friendship<sup>1</sup> and my duty. . . . I can assure you that if I ever have the happiness of placing my foot on the soil of my native land, nothing shall induce me to quit it again. Of the forty thousand Frenchmen who are here, there are not four whose determination is not the same as my own. . . . Adieu, my best Thérésia, my paper is drenched with my tears."—*Tallien.*

"The major part of the army is suffering from diarrhœa, and although victorious, it will terminate its career by perishing miserably if our Government persists in its ambitious projects. Many officers are throwing up their commissions; and I fully confess to you that I should throw up mine, if I had the least prospect of obtaining anything in France."—*Pistre.*

"There is a talk already of our ascending the Nile as far as the cataracts—an expectation that will make a number of officers throw up their commissions. . . . The cup of bitterness is poured out and I will drain it to the dregs. I have on my side firmness, health and a spirit which I trust will never flag; with these I will persevere to the end."—*Adjutant-General Boyer.*

"I do not know, my dear mother, when I shall have the pleasure of seeing you. I repent more and more of

<sup>1</sup> For Bonaparte.

our coming here ; but it is now too late. In a word, I resign myself to the Supreme Will.”—*Guillot*.

Amid the sombre colours of such letters as these there are occasional streaks of lighter tint. A brigadier-general thus describes his somewhat embarrassing position in a Cairo palace :

“ *Enfin, mon cher, j’occupe aujourd’hui le plus beau sérail du Caire, celui de la Sultane favorite d’Ibrahim Bey. J’occupe son palais enchantée et je respecte, au milieu de ses nymphes, la promesse qui j’ai faite à ma bonne amie d’Europe. Oui, je ne lui ai fait une infidélité, et j’espère que cela tiendra.*”

We must hope that this excellent resolution—worthy of a far earlier resident in Egypt—was not broken. Other writers were evidently less scrupulous than the gallant brigadier.

The letters of Adjutant-General Boyer, which have been previously quoted, are remarkable for their style and candour. The following appreciation of the French soldier, as he appeared to this able officer, must not be omitted :

“ I have seen enough to be convinced that it is not with soldiers that colonies are founded, above all not with soldiers such as ours. . . . They are terrible in the field, terrible after victory, and without contradiction the most intrepid troops in the world ; but they are not formed for distant expeditions. A word dropped at random will dishearten them. They are lazy, capricious, and exceedingly turbulent and licentious in their conversation. They have been heard to say as their officers passed by, ‘ *Les voilà, les bourreaux des Français,*’ and a thousand other words of this nature.”

Such, according to Adjutant-General Boyer, were the soldiers of the First Republic. If, however, in common with all troops and all individuals, they possessed the

defects of their qualities, they proved, under good leadership, capable of some of the finest military achievements that history records. Enthusiasm has always been necessary to show the French soldier at his best, and of enthusiasm there could have been exceedingly little during Bonaparte's Egyptian campaign.

The following has peculiar interest in the light of recent events. The writer shows rare insight, and his words were prophetic.

"In a word this country is nothing at present. It merely offers magnificent recollections of the past and vast but distant hopes of the future. It is not worth conquering in its present condition; but if statesmen, above all, if able administrators should undertake the management of it for ten years . . . it might become the most valuable colony of Europe, and effect an important change in the commerce of the world. . . . But where are they—these able administrators? We have, indeed, the man capable of giving the first strong impulse, but not a soul equal to its administration. . . . Oh! how many false reputations are acquired in Italy, and how many pedestals will now rest without statues! Besides, are the French—whose impetuosity was well adapted to the conquest of this country—are they, I say, endued with sufficient patience to wait for all this? Instantly eager to pluck the fruit, will they let it ripen for ten years, or will they not rather, like the savage of Montesquieu, cut down the tree to have it the sooner? The first measures which have been taken give me every reason to fear this."—*Adjutant-General Lacuée.*

The official documents which figure in the "Intercepted Correspondence" include the amazing proclamation issued by Bonaparte on landing, in which he informed Mamelukes, Bedouin, and Fellahin that "the French are true Mussulmans." This must be so, because "not long ago they marched to Rome and overthrew the throne of

the Pope who excited the Christians against the professors of Islam. Afterwards they directed their course to Malta, and drove out the unbelievers who imagined that they were appointed by God to make war on the Mussulmans." Never did proclamation fall so absolutely or so deservedly flat.

The clever, misleading and utterly disingenuous letter to Kléber, in which Bonaparte announced his departure and handed over the command, is well known. Less remembered is the manly despatch from Kléber to the Directory in which he unfolds the realities of the situation, and justly criticises Bonaparte's academic fallacies. "The General," he wrote, "further says that 'Alexandria and El Arish are the two keys of Egypt.' El Arish is a paltry fort, four days' journey in the desert. The immense difficulty of victualling it will not allow of its being garrisoned by more than 250 men. Six hundred Mamelukes and Arabs might, whenever they pleased, cut off all communication with Catiez ; and, as when Bonaparte left us this garrison had but a fortnight's provisions in advance, just that space of time and no more would be sufficient to compel it to capitulate without firing a shot." To speak of El Arish as one of the "keys" of Egypt was as preposterous as the later application of the term to Merv in regard to India. The allurements of a delusive phrase frequently seem, however, to be irresistible.

Ganteaume summed up the situation in words which should never be forgotten :

"I know all the importance of the possession of Egypt. I used to say in Europe that this country was for France the *point d'appui* by means of which she might move at will the commercial system of the world ; but to do this effectually a powerful lever is required and that lever is a navy. Ours has existed ! Since that period, everything has changed, and peace is, in my opinion, the only expedient that holds out to us a means of fairly getting rid

of an enterprise no longer capable of attaining the object for which it was undertaken."

A letter from Damas, General of Division and Chief of the Staff to the Minister of War, throws a strong light upon the military position in October, 1799. About 42,000 men originally landed at Marabout.

"The number of effective men on September 22, 1798, was above 33,000; it is now reduced below 22,000. From these must be deducted 2,000 sick and wounded, who are absolutely incapable of any duty whatever, besides 4,000 utterly unable to take the field or enter upon any active service. . . . The 16,000 men, comprising the forces of every description, who compose the army, are dispersed over a tract of country comprised within a triangle whose base extends from Marabout to El Arish and whose apex is above the first cataract. . . . It would be impossible to collect a force of 7,000 men at any one point to oppose the efforts of an enemy who menaces us with an irruption on every side."

Reflections on the general political situation are naturally rare in this correspondence; but Poussielgue, the controller of the finances of the army, makes some shrewd observations in which he contemplates future French claims upon Egypt and anticipates the mutual jealousies between Great Britain and Russia which have profoundly influenced the history of the nineteenth century. Writing to the Directory, he points out:

"Now, as the French Republic has nothing to apprehend from the English which is not trifling compared with the losses she must sustain from the establishment of the Russians in the Mediterranean; as there is not a chance of recovering from the English any part of what they have taken from us but by an immediate treaty . . . no present purpose would be answered and no incon-

venience would be sustained by adjourning our claims (*réclamations*) to a happier period. . . . I am persuaded that the English cannot see without some uneasiness and without a kind of secret jealousy the progress of the Russians—a progress much more dangerous for them than our continental power now that our navy is destroyed and we have lost our maritime conquests.”

The whole of this exceedingly able despatch is well worth reading. It sets forth the miserable state of the French army, and powerfully urges the need of an immediate peace. At the same time, it reviews the international situation with remarkable perspicuity considering that the writer's knowledge must have been much restricted. He rejects for example the then belief of “many politicians” that the Ottoman Empire was already tottering to its fall and he considers that “it will be eternally the interest of France, England, and Prussia, and even the Empire to oppose” the expected dismemberment.

No notice of the “Intercepted Correspondence” would be complete without some samples of the quality of the egregious editor. Two quotations from his abundant comments must suffice. One of the “*savans*” makes kindly mention of his horse “Milord” whose privations he deplores. This pleasant little proof of the humanity of the writer evokes the following explanatory footnote: “His horse which from the name we suppose to have been an English one. The joke of calling him Milord is not a very refined one, it must be confessed; but *savans* have now and then odd notions of humour.” The editor's sense of humour may be accurately gauged from another characteristic effusion. A certain Girez writes from Cairo to tell his friend Ramay in France about a “famous descent of the English upon the French coast. . . . They landed with 10,000 men, of whom 4,500 were taken prisoners, 1,500 killed and the rest put to flight.” This is a delightful yarn of the camp, and one feels strongly

attracted towards Girez when he goes on to say : " These islanders ought to be well beaten ; they should have stayed in their wooden houses. These animals descend, I think, in a straight line from Moses, who taught them the use of the sea. They ought to confine themselves to it, for the instant they get on land, they prove themselves to be a very stupid race." Biblical history may not have been a strong point with Girez ; but the following portentous comment is obviously superfluous : " If he will look into the history of Moses on his return (for we fear he will have no opportunity of doing so while he is in Egypt) he will find that Moses has little pretensions to the reputation of a teacher in navigation. His ' descendants in a straight line ' too know almost as little of the matter as himself ; but so it ever is ; ignorance and profaneness go hand in hand, and the sneer of the scoffer is produced by the misconceptions of the fool."

We cannot, after the lapse of a century, estimate the effect which the publication of these most interesting letters may have produced upon the minds of our ancestors. We can judge them only in the light of our day, and while the publication was discreditable to the Government of Pitt, it cannot now be a sore subject with our neighbours across the Channel. Taken as a whole, these letters are highly creditable to the heads and the hearts of the gallant Frenchmen who suffered and died in Egypt and Syria. A naval tragedy so complete, entailing military conditions so infinitely depressing, has rarely befallen an expedition. The absence of all vain glory and the modest estimates of the military achievements are remarkable. The all-pervading home-sickness was natural. It is impossible not to sympathize warmly with the suffering and the hopeless despondency which stand revealed. We are too ready to judge French character from selected specimens of Paris journalism. The student of human nature will find in the letters a safer guide, and will perhaps be in-



clined to qualify the popular judgment. The ruin of the expedition was due to the battle of the Nile, yet we trace no signs of bitterness against the race which stood directly between France and her ambitions. There is something touching in the words of Tallien to Barras : "The English themselves allow that all our ships fought well." The rancour which pervades the volume is supplied entirely by the editor.

One reputation alone is tarnished by the "Intercepted Correspondence"—that of Bonaparte, who without sufficient knowledge committed the expedition to an enterprise of the most hazardous nature and then abandoned to their fate the troops who had blindly trusted him. "I would never have believed," wrote General Dugua to Barras "that Bonaparte would have abandoned us in the condition in which we were, without money, without powder, without ball, and one part of our soldiers without arms." The cold cynicism of the instructions to Kléber that negotiations for peace might commence as soon as 1,500 troops had died of plague in addition to the daily losses in the field, cannot easily be forgotten or forgiven. The mendacity of Bonaparte's official despatches cannot possibly be justified. Between the Egyptian and the Russian campaigns there is a strong analogy. Both were foolhardy ventures undertaken without adequate knowledge of the country invaded. Both entailed terrible sufferings on the troops employed. Both showed the unpleasant spectacle of an army in direst need deserted by its Commander-in-Chief. In both, that Commander-in-Chief indulged freely in colossal falsehoods.

In the long history of naval war, the influence of sea power has never been more directly or more decisively asserted than at the battle of the Nile. Trafalgar, however important, was relatively less momentous, since Napoleon's project of invading England had been previously abandoned. In defiance of a universal law, the

French expedition of 1798 was deliberately undertaken. The fatal results are nowhere so plainly revealed as in the "Intercepted Correspondence." Here, told by its own officers, is the whole painful story of the sufferings and the gradual disappearance of an army stranded on a foreign shore with its sea-communication hopelessly cut. The lesson was evidently not learned by Bonaparte, who six years later was apparently <sup>1</sup> planning another invasion at a time when France did not possess and could not reasonably hope to obtain the command of the sea, and when the military resistance to be encountered after landing was incomparably superior to that of the Mamelukes and Bedouin to which Adjutant-General Boyer alludes in terms of contempt. The needs of an army in the field are now far more complex and more extensive than those of 1798. Over-sea campaigns cannot be carried out without secure communications and, if attempted in defiance of the teaching of history, they must end in disaster. Evasion may now, as in sailing days, but less easily in the case of large fleets of transports, be successfully accomplished. As in 1798, however, the success will prove dangerously delusive if the command of the sea cannot be gained and maintained. This is the first axiom of Imperial defence.

<sup>1</sup> There is of course evidence, based on Napoleon's own statements, that the invasion project of 1805 was not seriously intended; but the French people were at least led to entertain the opposite opinion.

### III

## MOLTKE

(*"Edinburgh Review,"* October, 1891.)

Moltke, as a soldier and as a man, always attracted me, and I carefully studied his campaigns and his writings in which I found valuable instruction. After his death, I wrote many reviews of his career of which this article is the most complete. It began with a sketch of Prussian history into which I tried to fit one of the greatest organisers, and certainly one of the most exemplary characters that Germany has produced. I have here included only my appreciation of Moltke's life and work from which, in long efforts to secure military reforms, I drew help and inspiration.

THE potency of her army has at all times been the gauge of the European position of Prussia, and the army has drawn its inspiration from the throne, either directly as in the days of Frederick the Great and his father, or indirectly through advisers whom the monarch has selected. But the efficiency of an army is bound up with the spirit of the nation, on whose patriotism, intelligence, and self-sacrifice its very existence depends. Thus the history of the years which followed after Jena, the years which led the Prussian army from utter disaster at the hands of Napoleon to a single-handed overthrow of France in 1870-1, involves much more than a mere military revival. The inherent qualities of the German race made possible the far-reaching reforms of Stein and Scharnhorst. The people accorded more than acquiescence to the organic law of 3rd September, 1814, by which the principle of universal service was established, and there is something admirable in the steady, quiet determination with which

Prussia in the days of her humiliation set about the work of military and national regeneration, which carried her troops to Paris in 1814 and again in the following year.

For nearly fifty years after Waterloo the Prussian army had no experience of real war; and grave defects were manifested in the mobilizations of 1850, 1854, and 1859, which the keen insight of the military advisers of the crown was quick to recognize. Prussia did not wait for disaster before applying the remedies, and the year 1860 saw great changes and augmentations sternly carried out in face of bitter opposition—changes subsequently justified on the plains of Bohemia. Meanwhile, in 1857, the Prince of Prussia, subsequently first German emperor, had assumed the reins of government; and at the same time an appointment had been made which was destined to exercise an enormous influence over the Prussian army. On 29th October, 1857, Major-General von Moltke became Chief of its General Staff.

Helmuth von Moltke—like Blücher, a Mecklenberger—was born in 1800, the year of Marengo, and as a child of six witnessed the sacking of Lübeck by the French troops after Jena. In 1811 his father moved to Copenhagen where, later, the boy was sent to the military academy. Many years afterwards he still retained a bitter memory of his young life in the Danish capital.

“Without friends or acquaintances (he wrote in 1866), we passed a thoroughly joyless childhood. We were treated with rigour, even with harshness. . . . The only good I ever received from this treatment was that I became well accustomed to every sort of privation.”

Truly, he may be said to have “graduated in misery’s college.” After a six years’ course at the academy, he headed the list in the examination of 1818, and in 1819 he was gazetted to an infantry regiment. Dissatisfied

with the career offered by the Danish army, and anxious to give his services to his native land, Moltke, in 1822, went to Berlin, where he seems to have lived a life of quiet study. After a year spent as head of the "somewhat disorderly military school" at Frankfort, he was attached to the topographical department of the staff under General von Müffling. From 1835 to 1839 his services were lent to the Sultan, and he took part in the disastrous campaign in Asia Minor against Ibrahim Pasha. In 1841 his collected letters from the East were published, as well as many maps, the results of surveys made in Turkey. Four years later Major von Moltke became adjutant to Prince Henry of Prussia, then an invalid living in Rome. There he witnessed the enthusiasm attending the accession of Pio Nono, and, returning shortly afterwards, significantly remarked: "I saw how quickly the enthusiasm had subsided as soon as the new Pope had convinced himself that he would have to halt upon the liberal paths he had chosen." Two books were the literary result of his life in Italy. For seven years, commencing in 1848, he served at Magdeburg as chief of the staff of the 4th Army Corps, then commanded by the Crown Prince of Prussia. A lifelong friendship dates from this period, of which the first public sign was the appointment of Moltke as equerry to the Crown Prince in attendance upon whom he visited St. Petersburg, Paris, and London. In 1857, as already mentioned, he assumed the direction of the General Staff, and his life entered upon a far wider sphere. The reorganisation of the army was completed in 1860, and in 1863 Moltke drew up the plan of operations of his first campaign.

For a Prussian officer of this period, the career briefly sketched above was most exceptionally varied. To a keen observer, whom nothing seems to have escaped, the opportunities thus presented were invaluable. Moltke had been called upon to assist in a reorganisation of the

Turkish army; his practical experience of surveying in wild countries had been great, and in Asia Minor he had accompanied the hapless force of Hafiz Pasha to the ruin which he foresaw, but was powerless to avert.

The whole story of the lost battle, in which some of the experiences of Baker Pasha in 1877 were anticipated, is vividly told in Moltke's *Letters on the East*. The keen-eyed Prussian officer, instantly detecting a turning movement on the part of Ibrahim's force, urged a general attack, which, however, "was reduced to an insignificant demonstration with our wretched cavalry." The movement successfully accomplished by the enemy, he at once advised a retirement to Birardchik.

"This position had the great evil, according to European principles, of being without a line of retreat; after all that I had seen, this circumstance appeared to my eyes its greatest advantage. Everyone . . . would see that it was necessary to hold on or perish." Hafiz, however, "declared that it was a dishonour to retire; he also feared that Birardchik was too strong; the enemy would not dare to attack us."

Moltke spoke his mind "in the most formal and frank manner in the presence of the superior officers of the army," and the Pasha agreed to follow his advice. No orders were issued, however, and an hour later he found Hafiz surrounded by his Mollahs. He had already changed his mind.

"The cause of the Sultan was just: Allah would come to his aid . . . I reminded him that the next day, when the sun again set behind these mountains, he would probably be without an army; all was in vain!"

At nightfall Moltke made a last fruitless appeal, and then, resigning his appointment as adviser, he set himself

to post the troops for the coming fight. The rout of the following day was complete.

“In a few minutes we had scarcely any battalions whose courage had not been shaken by their losses.” On the left wing “almost all the battalions were at prayer, with their hands above their heads—a manœuvre executed under the orders of the commandant.” The Pasha himself carried “the colours of a landwehr battalion; but the battalion did not follow him. . . . The infantry fired into the air at immense ranges, the cavalry dispersed, and soon all broke up.”

Such were Moltke’s first experiences of war. In a striking passage General Lewal contrasts the slow promotion, the unnoticed and unrewarded years of toil which the great German uncomplainingly endured, with the high rank and reputation easily won by French officers of the period.

“While this major laboured in Berlin without great recompense, high-sounding reputations, prodigious promotions were being won in Algeria. Men of the same age were attaining the highest rank, and, later, fate will bring these brilliant generals face to face with this persevering old Prussian major, in one of those immense convulsions in which the French army will go under.”<sup>1</sup>

Moltke’s *quasi*-Algerian experiences were brief, and brought him no honours; but unquestionably they were not thrown away on a mind capable of estimating them at their true value. It was something to have taken part in this rough and desultory warfare, to have led reconnaissances, posted troops for battle, foreseen and striven to avert defeat. “I perceived,” he writes, “that in war, spirit replaces much science.” There is something almost

<sup>1</sup> *Le Maréchal de Moltke* (Paris, 1891).

grotesque in the picture of the future organiser of the German army throwing himself with characteristic earnestness into the siege of a Kurdish stronghold. "When I saw the imposing castle on a formidable height . . . I could not help thinking that forty resolute men would here suffice for a very long resistance." Like Napoleon, when the progress of his army was arrested by the little mountain fort of Bard, Moltke instantly grasped the situation. Guns must be taken to the top of an adjoining rocky hill from which the castle was commanded. After great labour this work was accomplished ; but the shooting proved to be indifferent, and Moltke undertook a night reconnaissance, crawling on his hands and knees over the rocks in order to choose a place to begin mining. "As for the miner, you must picture an honest stone-cutter, a poor *rayah*, who was forced to exercise his peaceful trade for this warlike object." The description of the whole affair is admirable. It is just sufficiently serious, but shows all through that the writer exactly gauged the military significance of the operations in which he took an active part. A comparison between these letters and the grandiloquent despatches which have been written with regard to other operations of the same class involuntarily suggests itself.

"Algerian" warfare has, however, a certain educational value, provided that the sense of proportion is never lost or blunted, and Moltke's experiences in Asia Minor were unquestionably not without their effect on his subsequent career. The estimate of him as a thinker rather than a man of action, "*un industriel militaire*" rather than a soldier, needs much qualification. As an expert surveyor in a country as wild as Afghanistan, and as a staff officer with a loose irregular force, he abundantly proved his readiness of resource and genius for adventure.

No army in the world contains better fighting material than that of Turkey. The nizam is a soldier to the manner



born—brave, patient, hardy, and docile. At Kars and at Plevna he not merely showed a tenacity almost unrivalled, but here and there gave signs of the impetuosity and dash which are associated with the best traditions of France. The national conditions of Turkey, however, are fatal to the efficiency of her army, and the Russian war of 1877-8 served to illustrate its weakness in every phrase. The fates were not unpropitious; Allah did not frown upon the cause of the Crescent; the enemy committed a series of blunders which should have entailed disaster; but unity of purpose—even ordinary loyalty—did not exist among the Turkish commanders. The fleeting opportunities were lost, and the Russians, having won time to bring up reinforcements and to learn the lessons of war, irresistibly swept down to San Stefano.

In his admirable work on the Russo-Turkish war of 1828-9, Moltke showed how completely he had grasped the inherent disabilities of the Turkish army. Sultan Mahmud had none of the advantages with which William I. of Prussia was surrounded.

“Among his own followers he found no one enlightened man to aid him with counsel. . . . There was an utter lack of intelligent native officers, and prejudice stood in the way of the employment of foreigners. . . . The splendid appearance, the beautiful arms, the reckless bravery of the former Moslem horde had disappeared; but yet this new army had one quality which placed it above the numerous host which in earlier times the Porte could summon to the field—it obeyed.”

Nearly fifty years were to elapse before Russia and Turkey would again engage in a single-handed contest. One of the conditions which Moltke laid down as a certain feature of the next struggle—“that the Russian fleet in the Black Sea . . . will always be superior to the Turkish”—was not then fulfilled. He further pointed out that,

taught by bitter experience, "the Russians in any future war will probably advance into Bulgaria with much larger forces." But the Russian general staff in 1877 clearly showed that they had never really studied the reasoned criticism of the earlier campaign which came from the pen of the "ancien major persévérant." With equal truth it may be said that the plain teaching of this great work, and the just estimate presented of the Russian soldiery, were thrown away upon the British War Office in 1854. The indefatigable German had even provided important information as to the climate and military conditions of the Crimea, which was translated by a British officer on the eve of his departure to the East and forwarded to the authorities who affected to conduct the war. "But they would not be warned," he sadly wrote from the camp of Balaclava after witnessing the terrible sufferings inflicted upon the army by the ignorance and incapacity of its administration.

The history of the Russo-Turkish war, with its admirable lucidity, careful analysis and scrupulous attention to detail, added considerably to Moltke's reputation. In Prussia the truth of the saying of Don Quixote, that "the sword hath never blunted the pen, nor the pen the sword," has long been admitted. In style and arrangement the work foreshadows the staff histories, now recognised models of their kind, in which the deeds of the German army have found an enduring monument. These histories, containing a mine of wealth for the military student for all time, unquestionably owe their inspiration to the great Chief of the Staff, who guided, if he did not take a large personal share in their preparation.

While the strategic genius of Moltke has been variously estimated, there can be but one judgment as to his literary faculty. His rare gifts as a military historian are beyond question; as a letter writer, regarded in some aspects, he has few equals. Moreover, the letters attest the man.

Here is no pedant absorbed in a single science ; no hard, narrow soul in which things non-military found no resting place. His keen observation noted all which passed before it. The toilettes of the ladies of the Russian court are described in fullest detail and with evident accuracy, as calculated to interest his wife. Yet, as M. Marchand truly remarks, “ Ces lettres témoignent une fois de plus des qualités sérieuses qui sont la force de nos ennemis.”<sup>1</sup> For in the midst of a vivid word-picture of the view from his window, Moltke pauses to criticise the Fort of St. Paul : “ This fortress, being situated in the very middle of the town, cannot contribute to the defence of St. Petersburg.” The architecture and national customs of Russia are made the subject of bright comment. Here, in few words, is an admirable appreciation of the Russian soldier of 1856 : “ It is with him as with the whole nation, without his chiefs he would be in the most mortal difficulty. Who would think for him ? Who would lead him ? Who would punish him ? ” He is a pacific animal, who knows nothing of cock- or bull-fighting ; “ but an order from his superior suffices to make of the most peaceable Russian—against his tastes, it is true, and against his wishes—a soldier the most trustworthy, the most faithful to his duty.” And here speaks the cool observer of a great military spectacle at Moscow : “ I do not attach importance to the deafening hurrahs which lasted several hours ; but it was evident that these *vieilles moustaches* were pleased to see their Czar.”

General Lewal's imagination has pictured a nature hopelessly soured by an unhappy boyhood, absorbed in sombre hatred of France, cherishing inordinate ambition carefully hidden, incapable of friendship or affection, dead to fancy, lost to all sense of gentleness and beauty—a calculating machine rather than a man of flesh and blood.

“ L'humanité semble n'avoir jamais eu accès dans le

<sup>1</sup> Preface to French translation of *Letters from Russia*.

cœur de ce grand silencieux.” In its place we are to find only “cette haine qui a fait le fond de son caractère et l’a laissé isolé au milieu de la société.” We, with these many letters before us, derive an absolutely different impression. There are touches of tenderness and glimpses of quiet humour which lend the “charm of genius” which Mr. O’Connor Morris finds wanting in the history of the Russo-Turkish war. Can a critical history of war really convey the sense of charm? “On this bank,” writes the man of no imagination, “Medea plucked enchanted herbs; down in that broad valley, at the end of which a stream glitters, camped the knights of the first Crusade.” Below is a description of the first sight of Constantinople:

“On the tenth morning after our departure from Rustchuk we saw the sun rise behind a distant mountain, at the base of which lay a silver streak. This was Asia, the cradle of nations; there was snow-capped Olympus and clear Propontis with its deep blue surface studded with swan-like sails. Then arose, as it were from the sea, a forest of minarets, masts, and cypress-trees. It was Constantinople.”

“Coulé en bronze, bronze il demeurera, conservant la ténacité et l’inflexibilité du métal, comme sa froideur et son insensibilité.” Such is the verdict of General Lewal. Inflexible on occasion he certainly was, as the unfortunate De Wimpffen found at the Château Donchéry; yet there was another and a different side to the character of the man. Thirty years did not suffice to make him forget the old tutor of his boyhood, to whom he forwarded a copy of the *Letters on the East*, inscribed: “To my dear master and friend, to whom I owe so much, I send this, my first work, as a slight token of my esteem.”

“Do not envy us this campaign,” he writes from Asia Minor; “it is full of horrors. More than 600 prisoners

have perished ; half were women and children. Women have been wounded, children have been bayoneted." And personally he tended and fed many of the sufferers.

Nearly thirty years later he thus feelingly writes of his defeated adversary, Benedek :

"A vanquished commander ! Oh ! if outsiders had but the faintest notion what that may mean ! The Austrian headquarters on the night of Königgrätz—I cannot bear to think of it. A general, too, so deserving, so brave, and so cautious."

Scattered throughout Moltke's writings there are many such intensely human touches. Reserved and inexpressive he doubtless was. His life was too completely given up to labour to allow leisure for the cultivation of many friendships ; but that he was a mere cold, calculating machine is obviously untrue. His quiet, studious habits and intense dislike of all advertisement or semblance of flattery combined to throw a veil over his personality which has yet to be lifted. Meanwhile the statement of Baron von Bunsen, "I believe that throughout his long life on earth he never made an enemy," is, perhaps, the most striking tribute which could be accorded to the memory of one who has played so great a part in history.

The short historical sketch of Poland, first published in 1832, and rescued from oblivion nearly half a century later, serves to throw additional light on the genius of Moltke. It is a simple, clear statement of facts with few comments ; but here and there are passages which attest the writer's grasp of matters altogether outside of the pale of military science. The economic condition of the agricultural classes prior to the issue of the Prussian edict of 14th September, 1811, is thus described :

"The fields lay waste, the dwellings were in ruins. No peasant raised his hand to restore his hut, which threatened

to fall in upon him, and in which he had no right of ownership. Though wood, straw, chalk and stones abounded, and nature had provided materials in the fields which surrounded the wretched villages, the peasant never dreamed of using them, for he did not know if next year he might not be forced to leave, without compensation, what he had built to-day. . . . Bread, it should be remembered, was a rarity for the peasant in the great granary of Europe ; potatoes were his sole nourishment."

The terms of the edict were of a sufficiently sweeping character, and their justification is thus stated :

" According to the general principles of public law and political economy, the right of the State to ordinary and extraordinary taxes and dues is paramount, and the dues to the landlord are limited by the fact that he must leave the peasants means to exist and to satisfy the State. Their ability to do this can be taken for granted where the taxes due to the landlord do not exceed one-third of the income of an hereditary estate. The rights of the landlord could, therefore, never have been greater, or, if they were, it was illegal."

The passages above quoted were written by an unknown lieutenant of the Prussian staff, little over thirty years old, then engaged on a survey of Silesia and the province of Posen.

" Moltke seldom speaks in the Reichstag," writes Professor Müller. " A whole session may pass without his addressing the House, but when he does there is a death-like silence amid the throng of eager listeners, anxious that not a word should escape them. Most of his speeches naturally bear upon military questions." <sup>1</sup> The Nestor of the German army possessed a nature which could not find satisfaction in parliamentary life, and to the last he found

<sup>1</sup> *Field-Marshal von Moltke*, by Professor W. Müller.

other and more congenial work to do. His habits and experience did not tend to the formation of oratorical powers, but it is easy to understand the earnestness with which his rare utterances were followed, and the powerful aid he was able to give to the military measures of the Government. Speaking on the Bill introduced in February, 1874, for fixing permanently the strength of the peace standing army, he said :

“ The first necessity for a State, in order to exist, is to secure itself externally. Minor states can do this by neutrality ; a Great Power must rely upon itself and on its strength, being armed and determined to defend its liberty and its rights. To leave a country defenceless would be the greatest crime a Government could commit.”

In memorable words he went on to state where the strength of an army lies :

“ It has been said that it is the schoolmaster who has won our battles for us. Mere knowledge, however, does not raise a man to the point at which he is willing to stake his life for an idea—for duty, honour, or fatherland. It needs a whole training for this. It is not the schoolmaster, but the State which has won our battles—the State which, for sixty years past, has been, physically and morally, arming and training the nation to punctuality and order, to conscientious obedience, to love of country and manliness.”

In an admirable chapter of his great work <sup>1</sup> Captain Mahan has described the conditions essential to the existence of “ Sea-Power.” In the words above quoted, Moltke lays down, as Scharnhorst had done, one of the conditions on which the power of a modern army depends. It is, in a sense, the fault of the State that the army of Turkey is not one of the most formidable in Europe,

<sup>1</sup> *The Influence of Sea-Power on History.*

even though the causes may be traced further and deeper. Social and political conditions lie at the root of the weakness of the British army.

Interesting from another point of view are the few words spoken by Moltke in support of the laws proposed in 1878 for the suppression of Socialism. To him the struggle for existence appeared to be not merely inevitable, but the essential condition of progress.

“Want and privation are necessary conditions of humanity which no form of government, no code of laws, no human measures can ever set aside. And how could the human race have attained to its present development without the aid of these coercive elements in the divine economy? No, there will always be care and labour in the future; but a starving, freezing man does not think of the future, but grasps at such means of relief as the present holds out, and is driven by unbridled passion and mortified hopes to acts of violence which his leaders are least of all capable of hindering.”

Then, turning to the proceedings of the Commune in Paris, he drew the following lesson:

“*There* was an opportunity of showing what democracy could do towards an attempted realisation of its ideals. Yet, though it destroyed much, it constructed nothing. . . . On the path of overthrow the evil element soon absorbs the good, and a moderate Liberal always has a Radical at his back to goad him on. And this has been the chief error of so many in thinking it possible to level down to their own standard, and to call ‘Halt!’, as if an express train could be pulled up at a moment’s notice without destruction to all who are in it!”

In spite of the earnest attention which the speech obtained, the Bill was thrown out by a majority of nearly five to one, and a dissolution followed shortly afterwards.



Of the military genius of the man who for more than thirty years was the directing brain of the army which he organised and guided to victory in three campaigns, it is not easy to form a just estimate. On the one hand, the completeness of his successes and the unbounded confidence which he inspired tend to dazzle the judgment; on the other hand, the campaigns which he conducted were too few and too short to supply a sufficiency of comparison with those of Napoleon. More modern standards are at present wanting. The change of conditions which had arisen at the period when Moltke began to organise war was greater and more wide-reaching than any which preceded. The campaigns of Cæsar admit of comparison with those of Turenne. The handling of armies by Turenne may be contrasted with that by Napoleon. But at the period at which Moltke took office new forces had come into play. The musket did not possess much greater power than the yew bows of England, and the field gun of Waterloo was not a much more formidable weapon than that of Blenheim. In the development which followed the invention of rifling, however, a leap in advance was taken. Even more important in its influence upon the conduct of war were the immense improvement of the road communications of Europe and the introduction of railways. Most important of all was the moral revolution, brought about by education and the new requirements demanded of all ranks in the huge national armies which were no longer capable of being handled as a whole. In place of a cumbrous engine controlled by a single will, an army had become a vast living mass instinct with vivid life throughout its whole being, an instrument of extreme complexity, flexible to the last degree, a loose aggregate of men or a weapon of terrific power according to the perfection of its parts and the spirit and intelligence of its thousands of subordinate leaders. The nature of this change has been well expressed

by Colonel Maurice in the introduction to his recent work<sup>1</sup>:

“Under the conditions of the past, the general in command of an army relied upon its perfection in drill and in formal manœuvres for enabling him to direct it with success against the weak points of an adversary. Now he must depend, instead, upon the perfection of its organisation, and of a training adapted to make each man ready when required to apply sound principles in any emergency.”

We, with the history of the campaigns of 1866 and 1870-1 before us, write and speak glibly of the principles of organisation which modern conditions entail upon armies; but, with the clear insight of true genius, Moltke, the student of war, untried in any great campaign, firmly grasped those principles, and applied them throughout the whole vast fabric of the Prussian army. It is not possible to apportion its precise relative weight to each of the three determining factors—the directing brain of the Chief of the Staff, the complete trust reposed upon him by William I, and the inherent characteristics of the German race—which have combined to make that army the model of Europe. To admit the remarkable coincidence of conditions favourable to military power, is in no sense to detract from the genius of Moltke.

If in “the spirit of the age” are to be sought the causes which lay at the root of the collapse of Prussia in 1806, then assuredly in the national characteristics at a later period lay the strength of the army of 1870. Although the German race has always shown aptitude for a military training, it cannot claim any special genius for administration. No foreign nation has ever produced such an administrative machine as the government of India. None can show a private organisation to rival that of the North

<sup>1</sup> *War*, 1891.

Western Railway. But Germany has, sternly and without regard to class interests, applied the great principles of administration to her army; and we copying the letter here and there with little intelligence, while neglecting the spirit, continue to manifest in military matters every phase of administrative incapacity. Moltke saw clearly the needs of modern war and, following in the steps of Scharnhorst and Clausewitz, with inimitable earnestness set about the task of devising a system to meet those needs. King William had the strong good sense to rely on his Chief of the Staff; the nation learned to understand and trust him implicitly. We, with a potential armed strength of a million of men, are not at present able to realise that "the responsible duty of preparing plans of military operations, collecting and co-ordinating information of all kinds, and generally tendering advice upon all matters of organisation and the preparation of the army for war,"<sup>1</sup> requires "a special department" for its due discharge. A Moltke installed at Pall Mall would, under existing circumstances, find his hand paralysed. Genius, fettered by the trammels of a false system of administration, is almost useless to a State. Mediocrity under a sound system can at least turn out good work, and the General Staff which Moltke reared will continue to inspire the German army though the master has passed away.

It was virtually a new organisation which his genius created. Napoleon had no staff in the present sense. Preparation for war, as Moltke taught it to Germany, had no counterpart at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Enthusiasm, and the genius, personal prestige, and readiness of resource of the commander, were the conditions under which victory was wooed and won. No previous campaign was prepared as was that of 1870. No military concentration had ever been worked out to its last detail

<sup>1</sup> Report of Lord Hartington's Commission.

as was that which placed 370,000 men in the Palatinate in fifteen days. Thus the two methods of war—that of Napoleon and Moltke—differed essentially. The Napoleonic method had its weak side, in that it rested too completely upon the individual genius of the commander, left too much to the decision of the moment, and was not well suited to the handling of large masses spread over wide distances. The rare powers of Napoleon served to veil this weak side, which, however, his lieutenants, less gifted, frequently disclosed. It is impossible to believe that even Napoleon would not have derived advantage from a partial adoption of the later method, and he has himself explained how he would have organised an army if he had had time. In any case, the new conditions of war demanded change. The mobilisation of an army in which the greater part of the troops had to be recalled from their homes, forwarded to their respective centres, equipped, and then transported in large fighting units to the place of concentration, would be painfully slow, if not impossible, unless every requirement had been foreseen and provided for in advance. The full transporting power supplied by railways could not be utilised unless the most careful study had been devoted to the ways and means.

The old order had changed and the old methods no longer sufficed. It is the lasting distinction of Moltke that he grasped the new requirements, and, with a patience and earnestness above all praise, devoted himself to their fulfilment. “Berthier,” truly says General Lewal, “d’une véritable modestie et d’une capacité militaire assez ordinaire, se contentait de la position de secrétaire assidu, vigilant, exact, d’un général incomparable, et ne prétendait pas être autre chose qu’un agent de transmission des ordres et des rapports.” What the Chief of the Staff is to the commander of a German army, and how great the services rendered by the General Staff to the whole

military system, readers of Captain Spenser Wilkinson's excellent little work<sup>1</sup> will be able to judge. Lieut.-General Brackenbury has summed up these services in evidence given in 1887 before the House of Commons Committee on army and navy estimates. The general staff is stated to be "the keystone of the whole system of German military organisation . . . the cause of the great efficiency of the German army . . . the powerful brain of the military body, to the designs of which brain the whole body is made to work." Even the "incomparable general" of our day—if he exists—cannot afford to dispense with the assistance of this living force. In no other known way can a modern army be organised for war or a great campaign adequately prepared. Every Great Power in Europe has endeavoured to reproduce, according to its ability, the system to the perfection of which Moltke devoted half a lifetime. Great Britain alone has at present no semblance of a General Staff, with the results disclosed in the official history of the Soudan expeditions.

As an organiser Moltke is admitted to have been unrivalled. He "has 'organised victory' more thoroughly than has ever been seen," writes Mr. O'Connor Morris.<sup>2</sup> Yet to the mind of General Lewal the very refinement of his forethought and calculation seems almost a degradation of the military art, dragging it down to the level of the workshop.

"Depuis longtemps la conception de la guerre à venir lui est apparue comme une affaire industrielle soumise aux règles précises de calcul. . . . Après s'être usiné lui-même, il va usiner l'armée prussienne. . . . De Moltke est un spécialiste étrange, ayant conduit la guerre sans avoir jamais combattu; c'est un industriel militaire, un

<sup>1</sup> *The Brain of an Army.*

<sup>2</sup> *Great Commanders of Modern Times.* By W. O'Connor Morris (London, 1891).

entrepreneur de combats, ayant poussé l'usinage guerrier à un degré inconnu jusqu'à lui. Cette prévoyance, ce calcul anticipé, ces dispositions réglées d'avance d'une manière presque irrévocable, constituent évidemment un ensemble remarquable et nouveau dans les annales de la guerre ; c'est le triomphe de l'usinage et de l'outillage et, à ce titre, ils méritent d'être mis en évidence."

The questions arise, however, whether Moltke's campaigns have not proved distinctly that this "usinage" is an essential element of success in modern war, whether the disdainful term is really apt, and whether organisation for war in the new sense should not be placed in a much higher category. It is at least clear that the process of "usinage" did not convert the German army into a rigid machine, but conferred upon it extreme flexibility in spite of the great masses of men requiring to be handled.

The "complete project" which, as General Lewal states, was supplied by Moltke to King William in the spring of 1869 was a project of mobilisation and little else. None knew better than "the great arithmetician" the limits of calculation and prevision. "It is almost impossible," he wrote, "during a campaign to remedy an error in the primary concentration of the troops. . . . No plan of operations can with any certainty reach beyond the first encounter with the enemy." The "complete" plan of campaign, which has appealed so strongly to some imaginations, is defined in Moltke's masterly *précis* of the operations of 1870-1 :

"In the plan of campaign, submitted by the Chief of the Staff, and accepted by the King, that officer had his eye fixed from the first upon the capture of the enemy's capital, the possession of which is of more importance in France than in other countries. On the way thither the hostile forces were to be driven as persistently as possible back from the fertile southern provinces into the narrower

tract on the north. But, above all, the plan was based on the resolve to attack the enemy at once, wherever found, and keep the German troops so compact that a superior force could be brought into the field."

But in making arrangements to supply and reinforce the army under all contingencies, and to use to the utmost the transporting power of available railways, the plan was worked out to the last detail.

"The orders for marching, and travelling by rail or boat, were worked out for each division of the army, together with the most minute directions as to their different starting points, the duration of the journey, the refreshment stations, and places of destination . . . and thus, when war was declared, it needed only the royal signature to set the entire machine in motion with undisturbed precision. There was nothing to be changed in the directions previously given."

The distinction is important, as showing the limitations of this "*calcul anticipé*"—the point at which "*usage*" must end. In war the period is quickly reached when "our will clashes with the independent will of our opponent, upon which limits can be put by a well-timed and determined initiative, but which can only be overcome by actual combat."<sup>1</sup>

As a director of war, Moltke has been variously estimated. To some of his countrymen he appears the

<sup>1</sup> Moltke. In the recently published *précis*, this is still further emphasised. "It is a delusion to believe that a plan of war may be laid down for a long period and carried out in detail. The first collision with the enemy's army changes the situation entirely, according to the result. Some things decided upon will become impracticable; others, which originally seemed impossible, become possible. All that the leader of an army can do in a change of circumstances is to decide for the best for an unknown period, and carry out his purpose unflinchingly."

Andrea del Sarto of strategists. In the judgment of General Lewal he is an "ingénieur de combats plus que général de l'armée," and he will pass down to posterity "dépourvu du prestige et du nimbe glorieux qui font resplendir le front des grands soldats." According to Mr. O'Connor Morris, his operations "do not reveal one grand strategic conception, and are characterised by several grave errors. . . . He has not even approached the height of Napoleon. We miss originality in his conceptions of war."

The latter verdict is wholly unjust, and the reason is, perhaps, not difficult to seek. The great Chief of the Staff had none of the dazzling personality of Napoleon. For him there was no bridge of Arcola. No grandiloquent manifestos, no invocations of glory, no appeals to avarice,<sup>1</sup> no allusions to "the sun of Austerlitz" or the forty centuries looking down from the worn summits of the Pyramids, ever issued from him to infect an army with the fever of battle. The theatrical element was utterly foreign to a nature which knew not "'Ercles' vein." Retiring to a fault, Moltke perfectly understood his functions, and never sought to pass outside them. In the single person of Napoleon centred the glory alike of the strategic stroke and the well-ordered battle. It was Moltke's *rôle* to move armies to battles which others would fight. He was "a soldier fit to stand by Cæsar and give directions," but no aspirant to Cæsar's purple. Napoleon's military career ended at the age of forty-six; Moltke's first European campaign was fought when he was sixty-four. For twenty-one years Napoleon was almost continuously at war; Moltke's two great campaigns occupied less than eleven months. There was no time for the one to attain

<sup>1</sup> "Je veux vous conduire dans les plus fertiles plaines du monde. De riches provinces, de grandes villes seront en votre pouvoir; vous y trouverez honneur, gloire et richesses."—Proclamation in 1796 to the Army of Italy.



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But in making arrangements to supply and reinforce the army under all contingencies, and to use to the utmost the transporting power of available railways, the plan was worked out to the last detail.

"The orders for marching, and travelling by rail or boat, were worked out for each division of the army, together with the most minute directions as to their different starting points, the duration of the journey, the refreshment stations, and places of destination . . . and thus, when war was declared, it needed only the royal signature to set the entire machine in motion with undisturbed precision. There was nothing to be changed in the directions previously given."

The distinction is important, as showing the limitations of this "*calcul anticipé*"—the point at which "*usage*" must end. In war the period is quickly reached when "our will clashes with the independent will of our opponent, upon which limits can be put by a well-timed and determined initiative, but which can only be overcome by actual combat."<sup>1</sup>

As a director of war, Moltke has been variously estimated. To some of his countrymen he appears the

<sup>1</sup> Moltke. In the recently published *précis*, this is still further emphasised. "It is a delusion to believe that a plan of war may be laid down for a long period and carried out in detail. The first collision with the enemy's army changes the situation entirely, according to the result. Some things decided upon will become impracticable; others, which originally seemed impossible, become possible. All that the leader of an army can do in a change of circumstances is to decide for the best for an unknown period, and carry out his purpose unflinchingly."

Andrea del Sarto of strategists. In the judgment of General Lewal he is an "ingénieur de combats plus que général de l'armée," and he will pass down to posterity "dépourvu du prestige et du nimbe glorieux qui font resplendir le front des grands soldats." According to Mr. O'Connor Morris, his operations "do not reveal one grand strategic conception, and are characterised by several grave errors. . . . He has not even approached the height of Napoleon. We miss originality in his conceptions of war."

The latter verdict is wholly unjust, and the reason is, perhaps, not difficult to seek. The great Chief of the Staff had none of the dazzling personality of Napoleon. For him there was no bridge of Arcola. No grandiloquent manifestos, no invocations of glory, no appeals to avarice,<sup>1</sup> no allusions to "the sun of Austerlitz" or the forty centuries looking down from the worn summits of the Pyramids, ever issued from him to infect an army with the fever of battle. The theatrical element was utterly foreign to a nature which knew not "'Ercles' vein." Retiring to a fault, Moltke perfectly understood his functions, and never sought to pass outside them. In the single person of Napoleon centred the glory alike of the strategic stroke and the well-ordered battle. It was Moltke's *rôle* to move armies to battles which others would fight. He was "a soldier fit to stand by Cæsar and give directions," but no aspirant to Cæsar's purple. Napoleon's military career ended at the age of forty-six; Moltke's first European campaign was fought when he was sixty-four. For twenty-one years Napoleon was almost continuously at war; Moltke's two great campaigns occupied less than eleven months. There was no time for the one to attain

<sup>1</sup> "Je veux vous conduire dans les plus fertiles plaines du monde. De riches provinces, de grandes villes seront en votre pouvoir; vous y trouverez honneur, gloire et richesses."—Proclamation in 1796 to the Army of Italy.

the personal prestige of the other, even if, yielding to the tendency of the age, he had made self-advertisement the first object of his life. Each created an empire—the one in the hopeless attempt to satisfy his personal ambition, the other in single-hearted devotion to his King and his country. The military genius of the two men cannot be compared without first stripping Napoleon of half the glamour—the “*nimbe glorieux*”—which has gathered around his great name. For the real question is, whether there is any reason to suppose that to the brilliant campaigns of 1866 and 1870 Napoleon could have added brilliancy. No such reason can be alleged; and it is possible to believe that, just as Moltke did not possess the magnetic qualities required to create and lead to conquest the impressionable armies of the First Republic, so was Napoleon wanting in the power of patient labour, by means of which the hosts of Germany were quietly organised and then directed to victory.

In the diary of the late Emperor Frederick there are stray notes which convey a vivid impression of the strength and decision of Moltke's character. On August 20, 1870, after the great battles round Metz, we read of “Moltke quite cool and clear as ever; determined to march on Paris; Bismarck moderate and by no means sanguine.” November 23, by which date the activity of the French army of the Loire was assuming great development, is referred to as:

“a moment of exciting combinations. Moltke explains the entire situation with the utmost clearness and moderation; has always considered and calculated everything, and constantly hits the right nail on the head; but Roon's shoulder-shrugs and spitting, and Podbielski's Olympian assurance often influence the King.”

On January 15, 1871, Von Werder having expressed a wish to be allowed to raise the siege of Belfort, “Moltke

read this out, and added with icy and imperturbable calm, 'Your Majesty will doubtless permit me to inform General von Werder that he has simply to remain where he is and beat the enemy where he finds him?' . . . Moltke appears to me to be beyond all praise. Within a second he had settled the whole affair." Such glimpses show the great Chief of the Staff in an unmistakable light.

In the important appendix to his *précis* of the campaign of 1870-1, Moltke disposes of several fictions. There was no approach to panic at Versailles, as has been stated. "Versailles was protected by four army corps ; to evacuate the place never entered into anyone's head." As for councils of war at the German headquarters, "I can certify that, neither in 1866 nor 1870-1 was a council of war ever held." The working of the heart of the German system of administration in the field is simply described.

"Except on marching and fighting days, a report was regularly made to his Majesty at 10 a.m., when I, accompanied by the quartermaster-general, had to take over the reports and news received, and to make new proposals based upon them. The chief of the military cabinet and the war minister were present, and at Versailles, while the headquarters of the Third Army were there, the Crown Prince also ; but only as listeners. The King occasionally demanded from them information as to one matter or another ; but I do not remember that he ever asked their advice upon the operations, or my proposals relating to them. The latter, which I had always discussed previously with my officers, were subjected by his Majesty to a most thorough personal investigation. He pointed out, with military insight and always correct appreciation, all the obstacles of the situation which might impede the execution of the measures ; but, since in war every step involves danger, the proposals in the end were invariably adopted."

It is a picture of ideal simplicity of higher administration,

practicable only in the case of an army perfectly organised for war and possessing a Chief of the Staff whose genius demanded and obtained fullest confidence.

Moltke as a strategist will always suffer in comparison with Napoleon, by reason of the far fewer opportunities for the display of power which his career afforded. It may be said that a single proof of genius should suffice to fix the true place of a name in the roll of fame. Mankind as a whole will, however, always be imposed upon by magnitude, and achievements will inevitably impress in proportion to their number. Gray made less mark than poets who never approached the level of his *Elegy*. Military history shows no more striking achievements than Moltke's two campaigns. By these campaigns we must judge him, and while it will be recognised that his genius was not proved by adversity, that he was never called upon to act under circumstances such as beset Napoleon in 1813, the military critic of the future, equipped with that sense of proportion which time alone can impart, will claim for the "grand silencieux" a place by the side of the greatest captains of war. For, it will be asked, could Napoleon, or Turenne, who, said Napoleon, "was the only one of us all who constantly improved in the management of his campaigns as he advanced in years," have done better? Would either have done quite so well?

The German army and nation owe to Moltke much more than the successful conduct of campaigns. He built up a great system of administration suited to the needs of modern war. He raised organisation to a level previously unapproached, and reduced its principles to a science. To the student of military art in its broadest aspects he has taught more than Napoleon, for he has demonstrated the importance of that minute study of detail which Napoleon had no time to undertake. The armies which Moltke directed were by his own care and

labour prepared for war in a sense which Napoleon had not grasped ; and, it may fairly be added, the conditions under which the former was called upon to take the field involved a plunge into the unknown.

An army is a delicate organism. The spirit which animates it is capable of assuming many forms, and that spirit may be inspired by the life and example of few individuals. Personal ambition, flattery, greed of power and of wealth, were the main motives supplied by Napoleon, whose " marshals and generals, it is to be feared, set a bad example to their subordinates. They grew rich at the expense of the inhabitants of the lands they occupied, and were often paid heavy sums for issuing orders against plundering . . . or for exempting towns from requisitions or occupation." Berthier with emoluments amounting to about £55,000 a year, Davout with £37,000, serve to illustrate the seamy side of a system which is justly described as " resting on no secure moral basis."<sup>1</sup> In strongest contrast is the simple, earnest life of the great German Field-Marshal, in which personal aims, self-assertion, and vanity found no place. " I have a hatred of all fulsome praise," he wrote after returning from victory in Bohemia. " It completely upsets me for the whole day. . . . In this campaign I only did my duty ; my comrades did theirs too."

" Duty, Honour, and the Fatherland " were the watch-words of his long and laborious life. It is impossible to over-estimate the effect of such an example upon an army, which is quick to catch the tone of its leaders.

Moltke has left the memory of an unsullied life, in which nothing small or mean found a resting-place, and to which petty jealousy was unknown. Contented to labour for long years without recompense or recognition, the most dazzling successes took away none of the simplicity of his

<sup>1</sup> " Interior Economy of Napoleon's Armies," by Captain E. S. May, R.A., *United Service Magazine*, November, 1890.

character and aims. Duty, fulfilled with rare conscientiousness, sufficed for his ambitions. He has left a great example to soldiers for all time, and this perhaps is the noblest of his claims to lasting distinction.

#### IV

### THE LESSONS OF THE BOMBARDMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

(“*The Times*,” 17 September, 1883.)

My mission to Egypt in 1882, with orders to report in detail on the effects of the fire of our fleet on the defences of Alexandria, made a profound impression on my mind, and gave definite objects at which to aim in all subsequent writing on this and cognate subjects. This article was an attempt to convey some general lessons in popular form, as my exhaustive Report had been labelled “secret” and remains unknown to this day. I am convinced that, if it had been disinterred and studied before the Great War, the failure, loss and suffering which were incurred at the Dardanelles would have been avoided.

WRITING in the *Nineteenth Century* for February 1882, Lord Dunsany said :

“Dover, as against a modern fleet, is a very contemptible defence; the captain of a foreign ironclad might simply have knocked it into a heap of rubbish from behind his own armour without the loss of one life.”

This was a serviceable argument against the Channel Tunnel; but as a matter of fact the rifled armament of Dover is heavier than that of Alexandria, and there is no reasonable doubt that the guns of Dover, manned by English artillerymen, would in an hour defeat, not a single ironclad, but the great fleet engaged at Alexandria, with singularly little difficulty. The town would certainly suffer somewhat; its defences would scarcely be scathed.



The opinion thus deliberately expressed by Lord Dunsany may either be viewed as an instance of the national tendency to decry our own defences, or it may be held to illustrate the exaggerated views of the power of modern ironclads which obtained in some quarters. There was nothing whatever to justify these views. Guns are bigger ; the bursting charges of shells have been much increased, but the difficulties under which ships labour in engaging coast defences remain as they were at the time of the American war. General Gillmore, in his report on the siege of Charleston, said :

“ The old maxims that forts cannot withstand a competent land attack, but are able to resist and repel vessels are maxims still. . . . They have indeed been amply illustrated during the present war.”

In spite of the success of our navy at Alexandria these “ old maxims ” hold to-day, and will be fully vindicated on the first occasion that a modern fleet is committed to an attack on well-designed coast batteries fought by well-trained gunners.

Military operations, viewed in the light of practical experiments, can rarely be completely satisfactory. There is almost always some erring factor which stands in the way of absolute conclusion, and it is therefore necessary to be particularly careful in generalizing. In the case of Alexandria, however, there are some deductions which at least compel reflection. The works of the defenders were bad in most respects. The Egyptian gunnery was miserable. The disproportion of armaments was extreme. The ships had exceptionally calm water besides several other important advantages. Yet it needed an expenditure of about 3,400 projectiles and some eight hours’ firing, not to destroy the works and dismount all the guns, but merely to silence them.

The case of Fort Meks is particularly instructive. Its five rifled guns "commanded" nearly the whole of the armour of the *Monarch*, *Penelope*, and *Invincible* at 1,000 yards. At ranges up to 2,000 yards European gunners ought to have hulled the two broadside ships at every round. Supposing that on account of losses and consequent intermission of fire, the five guns of Fort Meks could only be fired five times in the hour, they would still have accomplished 87 shots before they were silenced, and nearly every Palliser projectile which struck the ships fairly should have penetrated their sides. We know how many hits were required to disable the *Huascar*, and she was fought with great gallantry. Under these circumstances it seems fair to assume that had Fort Meks been properly constructed and its guns properly handled, the inshore squadron would have been disastrously defeated. The three ships above named, together with the *Téméraire*, which also engaged Fort Meks at long range, would not perhaps constitute a powerful squadron in the Channel or Mediterranean, but even France might find it difficult to despatch such a force to the Cape of Good Hope, or the Australian ports. Surely the case of Fort Meks sufficiently studied affords some measure of the relative power of ships and coast defences and supplies a healthy corrective to rash assertions about the weakness of Dover.

Fort Meks had, however, one advantage. Its guns were not protected by masses of stone and iron such as we have erected on the banks of the Thames and Medway, but by a rough-looking mound of sand scarcely distinguishable from the general coast line save for the high buildings in rear. This advantage was shared by other of the Egyptian works, and it goes a long way in explaining the comparatively small number of effective hits our ships were able to inflict. The tendency of fortification of late years has been towards invulnerability. Assuming that ships in action would achieve a degree of accuracy

of fire never attained in practice, it has been sought to clothe our defences in impenetrable armour. Some years ago a distinguished admiral stated his opinion that it was improbable that guns weighing more than 25 tons would be mounted on board ship in his lifetime, except for special or experimental purposes. We are now confronted with 100-ton guns and the limit of weight is by no means reached. It is to be hoped, nevertheless, that the gallant admiral will be spared for many years of usefulness. The result of the race between guns and armour has been to leave us a large number of very costly works, mostly penetrable, difficult to strengthen, and admirably suited for targets.

Alexandria may at least teach us the immense importance of the form and appearance of the target we offer to an enemy's fire. Fortifications must not disdain to borrow something of the art of the landscape gardener. But, further, the great value of earth, and especially sand, protection has been amply reaffirmed. This is no new lesson. It was taught us in the Crimea; it was strongly attested in the American war; but in the excitement of the gun and shield competition it has been too much forgotten. Modern guns, increasingly powerful against armour, have gained relatively little against earth. The large shells, flying with high velocities and low trajectories, showed a marked tendency to turn up out of the sand parapets of Alexandria, and even when they burst the results were not very satisfactory. Nor is it easy to see how this is to be remedied. If sensitive percussion fuses are used, they burst the shells on impact and there is little penetration. If a delay action fuse is adopted the effect of a burst on graze—very great when it occurs near the inner crest of an open battery—is altogether lost. Again, it is very little use to fire Palliser projectiles against earthworks, and an ironclad fitted out for general service cannot carry a large supply of common shell.

The experiences of the American war seemed to prove that it was possible for ships to run past shore batteries. As to how far modern armaments have affected this question Alexandria affords no evidence. The protected portions of ironclads are now much stronger; the unprotected portions remain as they were; and both the penetrative power and the destructive effect of shells have been greatly increased. In range finding, concentration of fire, and hitting power generally, coast defences have made important advances. In passing shore batteries, machine guns may or may not be destined to play an important part; but it is not easy to see why, as sometimes appears to be supposed, they will confer exclusive, or even superior, advantages on the ship. On the whole, therefore, it seems probable that, although ironclads may—submarine mines and locomotive torpedoes apart—be able to pass coast defences as formerly, and no dashing naval officer would hesitate for an adequate object to attempt the operation, the risks are now much increased, and the possible damage to a ship is greater, so that the achievements of Farragut may not be repeated.

But, while uncertainty on this point remains, Alexandria seems to make it clear that ironclads cannot hope to silence earthworks by circling in front of them, or passing and repassing them. At this game, the batteries, if properly organized for defence, will unquestionably win, and the ships will receive damage of more or less importance, according to luck and range, without inflicting any corresponding injury on the works. It may be otherwise in the case of stone and iron forts. They stand much more nearly on a level with the ship. They are admirable targets; their guns are even more crowded, and all damage inflicted on them is cumulative. The issue between them and the ironclads must turn on armaments, skill in gunnery, and relative protection.

Regarding the power of England as organized for

defence rather than attack, the experiences of Alexandria are decidedly encouraging. It is certain that we can, at comparatively small cost, protect our distant harbours and coaling stations with the weapons we now possess. Finality in the construction of heavy guns is not by any means reached; but, on the whole, it is probable that progress will do more for the fort than for the ship. We now know with tolerable exactness the worst that ironclads of a certain class can accomplish under highly favourable conditions, since it may safely be assumed that what the English Navy failed to effect at Alexandria will not be effected by the corresponding ships of any other Power in the world. We do not know, however, the worst that coast defences can accomplish, and there are, moreover, some weapons as yet almost untried which ships may have to face in the next engagement of the kind. Besides fixed mines and locomotive torpedoes steered from the shore, fast torpedo-boats in daring hands will prove very awkward antagonists. Shrouded in her own smoke, and hulled every other minute by shore guns, possibly dispersed over a mile of coast, an ironclad will find some difficulty in guarding against the attack of a 20-knot torpedo-boat. Two or three of these craft would probably have altered the entire aspect of the action at Alexandria.

On the other hand, it has been said that the ships were not those best suited for such an attack and that specially designed gunboats would have done the work better. It is not easy to see why more or less unsteady gunboats should make better shooting than the great ships, though they would, of course, offer a less mark to the shore guns. The wooden gunboats at Alexandria would, of course, have been sunk had the guns of Marabout been properly handled, and their armaments were too weak to be effective; but the very trifling results obtained by their fire may practically be due to unsteadiness of platform, and, if so, the influence is not in favour of small vessels.

In any case, it would have required a vast fleet of gunboats to carry an armament equal to that of the eight ironclads. Under the special conditions which obtained at Alexandria, it is believed that the best form of ship for the attack was the ship which carried the greatest number of guns on the broadside, and the opinion of an able American officer, who carefully watched the action, that a few wooden frigates would have silenced the works more quickly and more cheaply, is not by any means a mere paradox.

The value of the experiences of Alexandria to England can hardly be overrated. In the first place these experiences carefully studied show us alike the strength and the weakness of our defences. They teach us that the power of a modern fleet has limits easily reached. They prove conclusively that we can, if we choose, make our distant harbours absolutely impregnable to a roving squadron. In the second place, they indicate the lines on which we should proceed in ordering our future defences. Shields may be left for sites where there is no room for anything else. Batteries of earth or sand (the latter wherever possible) should be the mainstay of our defences, and should be blended with the features of the coast line as far as possible. Guns should be dispersed and mounted on high sites wherever practicable. It will probably be said that these principles were all perfectly well known before. Their realization in some of our existing coast defences has, however, been very successfully veiled.

## V

# THE SUAKIN-BERBER RAILWAY

(*"The Times," 18 June, 1884.*)

As soon as it became evident that an expedition to Khartoum could not be avoided, Sir Andrew Clarke, then Inspector of Fortifications, began to urge the construction of the Suakin-Berber Railway. With his strenuous effort, which hopelessly failed, I was closely associated, and this article was written at his suggestion to explain the situation and the need of the railway. If the policy, which at one time Lord Hartington seemed to favour, had been adopted, I am convinced that Gordon might have been saved. The article is prophetic, except that the expedition never reached Khartoum, which, as I wrote, had to be occupied later. The railway was made without difficulty and now enables us to make effective our responsibility for the Sudan, which I regarded in 1884 as ultimately inevitable.

THE Suakin-Berber railway has formed the subject of many letters in many papers, but it is more than doubtful whether the real significance of this important project has been sufficiently appreciated. It is precisely one of those questions in relation to which the educating power of the Press is peculiarly valuable.

The present position of this country in regard to the Sudan may be stated in a few words. An expedition to relieve Khartoum in the autumn is inevitable—so much the Government have practically admitted—unless meanwhile Gordon escapes southward, having made terms for the remaining Egyptian garrisons, or succeeds in inflicting a defeat on the Mahdi's forces and restores order by his own unassisted genius. There appears to be only one

other alternative, and that is the sacrifice of the hero himself and of the remaining garrisons.

If none of these three things happens by September, a relief expedition must be sent—has, indeed, been virtually promised. But will the country decide on the total abandonment of the Sudan even in the event of one of these occurrences taking place prior to the starting of an expedition? The first would lead to the establishment of a strong militant Mohammedan power which would constitute a standing menace to Lower Egypt, and would with certainty ultimately entail military operations on a large scale. The second would commit England to complete responsibility for the future of the Sudan and the consolidation of a Government under Gordon or someone else, who must in any case be a *protégé* of this country. The third would leave us in the same position as the first, except that there would probably be an outcry for vengeance which no Government could resist. To acquiesce calmly in the defeat and slaughter of one of its Governor-Generals is impossible to a Great Power. If the question of the Sudan is fairly faced it will be generally admitted that, whether an expedition starts next autumn or no, some sort of hold on the Sudan must be maintained by England.

It is comparatively seldom that political, military, and commercial considerations can be satisfied by the same course of action. The Abyssinian expedition was carried out for a political purpose; the Afghan war was created avowedly for a political, really for a purely military end. The Quetta railway, when it is made, will practically confer a military advantage only. On the other hand the Indian railway systems, actually political and commercial in their aspects, are potentially military. The objects to be attained by a railway from Suakin to the Nile Valley are actually military and political, potentially commercial. English expeditions are for the most part costly and



particularly unremunerative affairs, and this affords an easy explanation of their unpopularity. Of the latter there can be little doubt, in spite of the eager excitement naturally aroused during the course of the military operations, however insignificant. And there is a terrible want of finality about these expeditions of ours ; it is so seldom that they achieve a permanent result or a result which bears any decent proportion to the expenditure. The Sudan expedition may produce permanent political and military effects, may be turned to permanent commercial advantage, may serve a constructive instead of a blankly destructive purpose. But in order that this may be the case and that the forthcoming expedition may not be as fruitless of real advantage as most of those which have preceded it, the Suakin-Berber railway must be made.

The present dread of becoming involved in the affairs of the Eastern Sudan is due solely to the vast distances. When the railway is made, Berber will be within twelve hours of English ships and will be as easy of access as Cairo. England will have a permanent hold on Khartoum, the heart of the Sudan, without the smallest necessity for the permanent establishment of a European garrison there. The mere accessibility of Khartoum will give the Governor of the Sudan, whoever he may be, a power which Mehemet Ali never wielded. The opening of the country to commerce is the one means by which tranquillity can be secured, and when once the Upper Nile is accessible to the markets of the world, large tracts of the interior of Africa will be opened up, and the stream of commerce will flow to and from the Red Sea.

Why does not Manchester support a scheme which would be immensely to its advantage? Much has been said and written about the Congo Treaty ; yet it must be years before the Congo can compete as a trade route with the Nile. An expenditure of £1,250,000 is all that is needed to connect the latter with the Red Sea by a metre

gauge railway and to open up the heart of Eastern Africa to British commerce. If, then, we elect to abandon the Sudan altogether, it is to be expected that the International Association will transfer its operations at once to the Nile, and the latter will fall ultimately under the sway of France. But behind commercial England there lies humanitarian England, which has been shocked at the horrors of the slave trade and is more than half inclined to advocate an English Protectorate in order to suppress the slave trade alone. Make this railway and the slave trade will die a natural death. Finally, there is the present military question, daily becoming more urgent. If every preparation at home and on the spot were made at once, the actual advance of troops would be immensely facilitated by the construction of this railway. In any case, the return of the expedition would become a matter of hours instead of weeks, and even the retention for a time of a force at Berber or Khartoum would not be much more serious than the present occupation of Cairo.

At the present moment it is impossible for any private company to construct this railway. The military and engineering difficulties are so closely bound together that the work can be carried through only by Government, and India alone can find highly trained military and civil engineers to supervise it. When the line is completed and tranquillity restored to the Eastern Sudan, it can be made over to the trading company which has already been partially formed. The whole cost of the railway would be little more than that of the camels required to transport a force of 7,000 men, and when the military operations are ended the country will recoup itself. Locomotives do not die like camels. If England declares at once, in unmistakable language, that this railway will be made and that the Sudan will not be given back to the Egyptians, the bitter opposition of the native tribes will cease and the military difficulties will practically disappear. More-

over, the railway will achieve the commercial success predicted by every competent authority on the subject.

To sum up : the requirements of the present and of the future can be satisfied only by the construction of this railway. When it is made, an English Protectorate of the Eastern Sudan will be a responsibility scarcely greater than that which we have already incurred on the shores of the Red Sea ; or if a Rajah Brooke can be found to undertake the country, his task will be rendered comparatively easy. In a word, the existence of this railway will leave us masters of the situation, able to protect if we choose, or—if we “ Sarawak ” the country under an Englishman or some clean-handed Zebehr—able to assert our authority at any moment.

Another policy may be followed, and its results may be foretold with tolerable certainty. We shall have a costly expedition, relieve Khartoum, hold the lines of communication till the garrison has been withdrawn, and retire, having done absolutely nothing towards the final solution of the question of the Sudan. The Mahdi, or some other religious adventurer, will form a Mohammedan state, Egypt will be in a state of chronic ferment and will ultimately be invaded. Military operations which may again require us to go to Khartoum will then be inevitable.

## VI

### THE NORDENFELT SUBMARINE BOAT

(*"The Times," 1 October, 1885.*)

This article was perhaps the earliest attempt to forecast the future potency of the Submarine Boat, then in embryo. The forecast is faulty in some respects ; but it gave warning of the new possibilities. If the possible action of the U-boats and the means of attacking them had been carefully studied before the Great War, we should not have been brought near to starvation ; but unfortunately the Admiralty had been mainly occupied in developing—not in defeating—the submarine. At Landskrona, I suggested the periscope to Mr. Nordenfelt, but the idea would, of course, have occurred later to many minds.

THE interest excited by the recent trials of the Nordenfelt submarine boat is sufficiently shown by the presence at Landskrona of thirty-nine officers representing every European Power, as well as Brazil and Japan. Such a boat, if successful, will exercise a powerful influence both on naval warfare and on coast defence. Its possible uses are manifold, its moral effects are unquestionable, and against its operations no system of defence at present suggested seems adequate.

The torpedo boat has been met, actively by the machine gun, capable of delivering an extremely rapid fire of small shell at ranges beyond the useful limit of the Whitehead, and passively by the steel wire netting with which it is proposed to surround ships. Again, the torpedo boat can be met and fought on the sea by similar boats, faster, better handled, or better armed. On the other hand, a boat which can maintain a fair speed under water for several hours,

which need only rise to the surface for brief periods, and can sink at will if discovered, which can lie *perdu* and direct a steered torpedo, or run up to close quarters and fire the Whitehead at 10 feet below the surface, is undoubtedly an exceptionally dangerous antagonist. If the problem of producing such a boat can be solved, the largest ship would be secure only when in rapid motion, no port could be satisfactorily defended, and no system of submarine mines could be regarded as safe.

It is no new problem. Submarine boats were employed in the American war, where some successes were claimed for them, and considering the enormous advantages to be obtained, it is not surprising that at least one European Power has devoted both time and money to experiment. But there has been a natural tendency to preserve secrecy on the subject—since to create the vague suspicion of the possession of a submarine boat would be a more desirable object than to proclaim the existence of one with known imperfections and limitations. Besides, the past record of the performances of these boats has not been free from disaster. Several have sunk with their crews to rise no more; others have remained fixed and helpless at the bottom for long periods, to be saved only by exceptional coolness and exertion on the part of the crews. It would be clearly unwise to create an antecedent impression of the exceptional danger involved in their service at a time when such danger might be due chiefly to structural imperfection and want of knowledge. For the problem is no easy one, when its conditions come to be realized. Power to sink and rise rapidly at will, fair speed under water, horizontal and vertical steering power under full control, endurance of motive force, and air supply for the crew, are only some of the many requirements on the fulfilment of which success is dependent.

The Nordenfelt boat, the first of its class, was built at Stockholm about two years ago. The boat is cigar-shaped,

with a coffin-like projection on the top amidships, formed by vertical combings supporting a glass dome or conning tower, 1 foot high, which enables the commander to see his way. The dome, with its iron protecting cover, stands on a horizontal lid, which can be swung aside to allow the crew of three men to get in or out without difficulty. The length of the hull is 64 feet and the central diameter 9 feet. It is built of Swedish mild steel plates  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch thick at the centre tapered to  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch at the ends, supported, on angle-iron framing, 3 inches by 3 inches by  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch. The arrangements for sinking the boat are of a special nature, for which the inventor claims important advantages.

Practically, such a boat can be sunk in three ways, singly or taken in combination. It may be forced down by power applied from within, weighted down by taking in sea water sufficient to destroy the buoyancy, or it may be steered down by the application of its ordinary motive power modified by a horizontal rudder. Mr. Nordenfelt has adopted the former arrangement, placing sponsons on each side of the boat amidships in which are wells for the vertical propellers capable of working the boat up or down. In order to prepare for action, enough sea water is taken in to reduce the buoyancy to 1 cwt., which suffices to keep the conning tower well above the surface. In order to sink the boat further the vertical propellers are set in motion and, by their action, it is held at the required depth. Thus, to come to the surface again, it is merely necessary to stop the vertical propellers, in which case the reserve of buoyancy at once comes into play. This principle is rightly regarded as important, even if not essential, in a safe submarine boat. A breakdown in the engines does not entail danger, since the reserve of buoyancy is never lost for a moment. As a still further safeguard, however, Mr. Nordenfelt has provided an automatic check on the downward motion. A lever, with a weight which can be adjusted so as to counterbalance any desired

head of water, is connected with a throttle valve supplying steam to the engine working the vertical propellers. Thus, directly the desired depth is exceeded, the increased head of outside water overcomes the weight, and the vertical propellers are stopped.

The motive power is steam alone, generated in a boiler of the ordinary marine type with a forced draught. So long as the boat runs on the surface, this boiler can be stoked and a constant head of steam maintained. The smoke is driven out through two channels which pass partly round the hull and point aft. For submarine work, no stoking is, of course, possible, and the firebox has to be sealed. It is therefore necessary to store the requisite power beforehand, and this is done by heating the water in two tanks placed fore and aft and connected by circulating tubes with the boiler, till a pressure of about 150 lb. per square inch is attained. With about this initial pressure, it is stated that the boat has been driven for 16 miles at a speed of three knots. The greatest surface speed attained is a little over eight knots, and the boat has been run for 150 miles without re-coaling. There are three sets of engines, one of which drives the propeller, an ordinary four-bladed screw 5 feet in diameter, with a pitch of 7 feet 6 inches. The other engines drive the blower and the horizontal propellers respectively.

One of the principal difficulties of submarine navigation is to preserve an even keel when under water. Should a boat turn downwards when in motion below the surface, it might easily strike the bottom or reach a depth at which it must collapse before its course could be arrested. On the other hand, if the bow took an upward turn under the same circumstances, the boat would rapidly come to the surface and be exposed to view and to projectiles. It is evidently, therefore, of the utmost importance to provide ample steering power in a vertical direction. In the Nordenfelt boat, two horizontal rudders are placed

one on each side near the bows, and are acted upon by a pendulum inside the hull. This pendulum, coming into play the instant the boat takes a cant in either direction, actuates the horizontal rudders and causes her immediately to return to an even keel. By this means it is claimed that the boat is automatically kept with her axis horizontal, while since the bow rudders are entirely beyond the control of the crew there is no danger of accident due to neglect or loss of nerve. In the event of a breakdown of the above arrangement, it is necessary at once to stop the boat and let her return to the surface. No compressed air is carried, and the crew depend, therefore, for existence on the amount of air sealed up in the hull. With this amount of air only, four men have remained for a period of six hours without any especial inconvenience. The above are the main features of the invention which Mr. Nordenfelt has just made public, and which has received the careful consideration of experts of many nations.

The general principles embodied in the Nordenfelt boat have been described ; it remains to discuss its performances and future possibilities. The public trials took place off Landskrona, a small harbour on the south coast of Sweden, the representatives of the various Powers being taken on board the Swedish gunboat *Edda*, which had been courteously placed at their disposal by the Minister of Marine. The first trial took place on the 22nd September, in presence of the King and Queen of Denmark, the Empress of Russia, and the Prince and Princess of Wales, who arrived from Copenhagen in the *Osborne*. The submarine boat was towed out about 2 miles from Landskrona by a steam launch, and in casting loose her bow rudders were unfortunately fouled by the tow rope. A boat was lowered from the *Edda* and one of the Swedish bluejackets mounted on the back of the Nordenfelt and running out to the bows cleared the rope with great smartness. The rudders had, however, received a strain,



which it was stated crippled her vertical steering power and rendered movement below the surface undesirable until repairs were effected. On this day, the experiments were confined to demonstrating the movement of the boat on the surface, and her power of being submerged partially and entirely. Moving at a rather slow speed, probably never exceeding five knots, the boat was manœuvred round the *Edda*, and showed good steering qualities. She was repeatedly submerged to a depth of about 5 feet, disappearing below the surface in about half a minute, but only remaining below for very short periods. On the second day, the boat steamed out about 10 miles from Landskrona in the direction of Helsingör, but remained always at light draught. On the third day, in a very calm sea, she for the first time exhibited her power of moving under water, disappearing for periods never exceeding four and a half minutes, and moving for distances apparently of about 300 yards.

Riding light on a grey and almost motionless sea, the hull of the torpedo boat was scarcely visible at 1,000 yards. In spite of her light grey colour, however, the vertical combings supporting the cupola showed out dark on account of the abrupt change in the angle of reflection. Thus, viewed broadside on, the appearance was that of a short dark log lying on the surface of the water. In this position, and in a calm sea, the wash of the screw was visible, and in broad daylight could hardly fail to attract attention. It was generally felt, however, that such a boat advancing end on at speed would offer a particularly unsatisfactory mark to fire at, even with machine guns; while in a bad light it would be almost impossible to shoot with any chance of effect. Compared with an ordinary torpedo boat for example, the chances of hitting would be inconsiderable, and a boat of this build, if a speed of twenty knots could be attained, might probably approach to Whitehead range without excessive risk, even if she did not

possess the power of disappearing below the surface. There was no smoke or escaping steam to proclaim her presence at a distance of many miles, and—up to 1,500 yards range at least—she could probably advance with absolute impunity. The process of sealing up and sinking to deep draught occupied about twenty minutes, and in this position the top of the combings was just awash, and only the cupola was visible above the surface. Thus trimmed the available target becomes insignificant and the possibility of hitting it extremely remote. Submerged to a depth of 5 feet in a calm sea, the boat was visible as a shadow on the surface of the water, and from the tops of the *Edda* she could be distinctly made out at a distance of about 600 yards. The observers, however, knew exactly the spot at which she had sunk, and, failing this advantage, would probably have been quite unable to detect her position. While moving under water no trace of the boat was visible, and it was impossible to foresee the position at which she would rise. The impression produced on the mind by seeing the boat thus disappear was decidedly uncomfortable, and it was generally acknowledged that the sense of insecurity which the mere presence of such a boat would cause on board ship, would be no small factor in war. In a slight sea the Nordenfelt proved remarkably steady at light draught, riding level, while the launch in company was moving considerably, and an ordinary torpedo boat would probably have been affected to some extent. The wash over the bows and against the front of the combings served, however, to render the boat more conspicuous.

Summing up, it may be said to have been demonstrated that the Nordenfelt boat can be rapidly submerged at will, and can move under water, at all events for short distances, when the firebox has been sealed. The speed attained below the surface is unquestionably slow, and, as has been already stated, the inventor only claims three knots for

this particular boat. There appears to be no reason why the boat should not maintain this speed for considerable distances when submerged ; but, whether for prudential reasons or otherwise, its power to do so was not shown at Landskrona. Certain defects are obvious. The speed is insufficient ; the period of twelve hours required to get up pressure is too long ; the vertical combings must be abolished ; there is no means of getting in or out of the boat when it is submerged ; the perfecting of the vertical steering arrangements is perhaps doubtful. These first public trials of a submarine boat will, however, undoubtedly produce results far beyond a mere criticism of the existing craft. Many shrewd heads have been set thinking, and the great possibilities of this mode of attack have been brought home with a force which no mere description, however graphic, could have excited. It is one thing to read of vaguely described exploits in the American war, or indefinite rumours of Russian experiments. It is quite another matter to be brought face to face with a boat which disappears before one's eyes to reappear in an unexpected position.

The present boat is admittedly imperfect, but its performances have served to show clearly the possibilities which lie before us. Some of the difficulties which beset the construction of a submarine boat have been overcome more or less completely. The rest appear to be scarcely insurmountable, and it may be taken as certain that the perfection of this most dangerous weapon of attack is only a matter of time and brains. Even without the power of complete submersion a boat of this type, given speed, would prove a most formidable antagonist. Protected to a degree impossible in the case of an ordinary torpedo boat, it might in the hands of one or two daring men safely reach ranges at which the Whitehead would be deadly. The chances of a torpedo boat in broad daylight depend entirely on smoke and the comparative

confusion and inevitable excitement which must prevail during an action. Favoured by these conditions, it may be possible for such a boat to reach striking distance unharmed; but modern machine guns in cool hands would unquestionably render the operation excessively risky, and the attack of a single boat, under ordinary circumstances, would offer small chance of success. A boat of the Nordenfelt type could, however, run up to at least 1,500 yards with trifling danger, and, if it could then be submerged and continue its course for another 1,000 yards, would be an awkward assailant for the ironclad. Such a boat affords, perhaps, the one really practicable mode of isolated torpedo attack in broad daylight. Off chances apart, the ordinary torpedo boat would have to trust mainly to numbers, by which it might be hoped to distract attention, create a general nervous demoralization, and so enable one or more boats to reach close quarters. A single submarine boat might, however, if all requirements can be complied with, prove to be the equivalent of a fleet of ordinary torpedo boats.

Cardinal importance has naturally been attached to the power of complete submersion; but it is evident that, under many circumstances, this power need be resorted to only when it is necessary for self-defensive purposes. In attacking, the boat might remain on the surface as long as possible and dive only when the machine guns have opened upon it and begun to find its range. The power which would be conferred by the possession of a good submarine boat can scarcely be exaggerated. When Colonel Chesney, in the *Battle of Dorking*, summarily disposed of the British Navy, the mode adopted was the subject of some criticism. It will be remembered that the invaders, whose nationality is so distinctly indicated, possessed a peculiarly fatal torpedo, which we in England knew little or nothing about, and by means of which our available fleet was eliminated from the scene. It was

necessary, for the purposes of the tale, to get rid of that fleet; but it was generally considered that the *modus operandi* savoured somewhat of Jules Verne. The construction of a submarine boat, already foreshadowed by that ingenious writer, is, however, by no means beyond the powers of modern science, and it will be generally admitted that, given the possession of such boats by one of two belligerents, the navy of the other might in very truth be either destroyed or neutralized.

It seems difficult, indeed, to set limits to their possible sphere of action. On the one hand, there appears to be no special reason why a submarine boat dropped off a port by a fast cruiser should not calmly navigate the harbour and proceed either to torpedo the shipping sheltered there or destroy the mine defences. It is true that nettings stretched across the channels of approach promise substantial protection, but they would be an intolerable obstruction to the use of the port. On the other hand, for purposes of defence, such boats could on the approach of a fleet take up their stations near the position from which bombardment was practicable and await the enemy in placid security. Open and otherwise almost indefensible towns, such as Brighton, would possess a means of defence ready to their hand. Submarine boats could be launched on any coast, and their mere presence would probably suffice to deter the approach of hostile ships.

The rôle of the submarine boat in purely naval warfare is less easily laid down. Their probable want of speed would to a certain extent limit their action, but their moral effect would be great, and they would confer a new value on speed and manœuvring power in ships. If they were to end the day of the great ironclads, few would perhaps be found to regret the change; and it would be a strange instance of the irony of progress if these costly monsters became obsolete before they had

ever really justified their existence. On the whole, small and non-aggressive Powers would perhaps gain most by this new and, comparatively, cheap weapon. Coast defence, already very formidable, would be rendered less expensive and its sphere would be extended. Every change in the art of war has raised people who loudly proclaim it as fatal to the supremacy of England; but there will be some who will take a different view, and will argue that it implies increased strength to a Power which has much to defend, and seeks no territorial aggrandizement at the expense of its rivals—a Power, moreover, to which conscious defensive strength means wealth and prosperity.

It is certain that the Nordenfelt boat as at present existing will effect no revolution; but it seems to be equally clear that we shall shortly have to face possibilities which we have been hitherto able to neglect. Scientific experiment, in other words money judiciously applied, will enable us to hold our own in any future development of submarine warfare, and to omit to employ every effort to be first in a race in which the start is even would be to court disaster.

## VII

# INVISIBILITY

(“*Royal Engineers Corps Papers*,” July, 1886.)

The crucial importance of Invisibility was first brought home to me by my studies at Alexandria in 1882 and by the difficulties of vision explained to me by Naval officers who took part in the action. Later, there came opportunities of examining our defence works at home and at Malta, and I determined to try to reduce “Invisibility” to a science by laying down certain principles of general application. In the Great War, *camouflage* instantly became of first-class importance and was applied even to ships. In 1886 there was no idea that protection from aerial observation would be essential, and the late Mr. Solomon J. Solomon, R.A., developed with great ability and marked success the principles which I had laid down some thirty years earlier.

THE defences of Alexandria possessed only two advantages : they were constructed mainly of sand, which turned up the heavy projectiles of the attacking ships, and many of them were comparatively invisible. This latter characteristic was pointed out in the report on the results of the bombardment, where invisibility was contended for as one of the most important conditions to which the coast defences of the future should conform. It may now be useful to discuss the subject more fully, and to seek to show how far this condition can be fulfilled under different circumstances.

At starting, it is fully granted that at short range, where the details of a work and the position of shore guns can be clearly made out, such invisibility as can usually be attained matters but little. Captain Lewis, R.E., in the Appendix to his able Lectures, reiterated his opinion that

“ships attacking a properly built and manned fortress will fight at short ranges.” It is not easy to see why, when worthily opposed, ships should adopt tactics for which they have shown no preference in attacking weak and badly manned defences ; and it is certain that mines, of which ships are not indisposed to take account, will in many cases prevent close quarters. Accepting Captain Lewis’s dictum, however, as the rule of the future, exceptions will unquestionably occur in which the advantages claimed for invisibility will have full scope. All naval commanders are not equally daring. Lightly armoured vessels may have to engage coast defences. Injuries inflicted, say in an attempt to force an entrance into Port Philip, Victoria, 9,600 miles from Toulon and 5,000 miles from Vladivostock, would not be lightly risked. Mines and difficulties of navigation may combine to prevent an enemy from following the obsolete and now utterly erroneous maxim of “reserving his fire till he can see our eyes.” Coast defence batteries will certainly not defer *their* fire till the ship is at close quarters, and the ship herself may possibly be tempted to reply. Under these circumstances, it is still worth while to consider how far we may protect our works, present and future—the more so as this sort of protection, at least, costs little.

The object in view is so to disguise coast defences that their design may not be patent to the most casual observation ; and secondly, to render the individualizing of the guns of the defence as difficult as possible. Granted that the plans of our defences and the positions of our guns will be known to all the world ; still the practical advantages of invisibility will be none the less marked. There may be a perfect map of Malta in the Captain’s cabin ; but if this has to be translated to individual members at the ship’s guns, in the heat, smoke, and confusion of an action, its value will be heavily discounted.

Another important fact, re-attested by the action at



Alexandria, is that in order permanently to silence coast defence guns it is necessary to hit them. Every gun disabled by the fleet was fairly hit ; and of all the guns mounted in accordance with other than mediæval ideas, there was but one case of independent injury to carriage or platform, sufficient to cause permanent disablement. In the case referred to, the gun—never in action—was taken in reverse, as might reasonably have been expected from its position. It may, perhaps, be laid down as an axiom, therefore, that guns mounted in good earthworks must be individually hit in order to place them *hors de combat*. The cases of guns mounted close under high buildings, such as the Pharos Tower at Alexandria, the Europa Lighthouse at Gibraltar, or half a dozen well-known instances at Malta, obviously do not fall into the above category. Such guns may be seriously disabled by projectiles which ought to be recorded as “5,000 yards over.” In other words, the vulnerable target need be little larger than the breech section of the gun. Theory will doubtless prescribe that in attacking barbette guns, ships should invariably cross-fire, so as to obtain a broadside target ; but human nature is sometimes opposed to theory, and there may be expected to be a considerable tendency on board the ship to fire at the particular guns which are hulling her, rather than to leave them to the chance ministrations of a distant consort, who is only too likely to be imbued with a similar prejudice.

The clear moral of it all is that anything which can be done to render laying on a particular shore gun less easy must be a definite gain to the defence. Study the appearance of various works, as viewed from the sea, and the difference will be found to be enormous. Given suitable conditions, the guns will be barely distinguishable with a field glass on a clear day at 2,000 yards ; seen *en silhouette* against the sky, or a contrasted background, they will be

clearly visible to the naked eye for 6 miles. The great Krupp gun in the Dardanelles frankly announces its presence by appearing as a black bulls-eye on a bright white ground. The 100-ton gun in Cambridge Battery, Malta, requires a practised eye to find it, and might be made almost invisible. The 38-ton gun in Harding's Fort, Gibraltar, is pointed out with eager pride by every tourist on board a P. & O. steamer. Its fellows at Hatherwood Battery, Isle of Wight, are in certain lights altogether invisible. The difference would apparently exercise a marked effect on an action.

The difficulty of maintaining a complete general direction over the fire of a ship—more especially if in motion—is very great. A highly trained officer, with nerves of iron, may, perhaps, be spared to lay each turret ; but the majority of the guns on board an ironclad must be laid by gunners, who will not always adopt a severely scientific view of the object of their fire, and who will frequently—as at Alexandria—show a weakness for a good upstanding target, independently of the probable advantages to be gained by hitting it. If, to such, you can say, “fire at that particular gun only,” it is a clear gain. If you must amplify your directions—“fire a little to the right of that brownish bush ; not the bush nearly on a line with that low tree, but the one which is almost directly above that triangular piece of bare grass ; there is a heavy gun there, and you will see the flash in about two minutes”—there are evident elements of error. Suppose the ship to be under way, and the relative positions of things changing every minute ; try to imagine the disturbing influences of an action ; remember the natural tendency of the average No. 1, when his gun is loaded, to let it off without waiting for a nice discrimination of particular bushes, trees, or other objects ; finally, reflect that the officer cannot be always at hand to see where the shot goes, and it will be granted that this translation of the field-glass observation of the

gunnery lieutenant to the gunner's unaided eye may not invariably secure literal obedience.

It is proposed to consider under several heads the conditions by which comparative invisibility may be obtained in coast defences present and future.

### BACKGROUND

A hill rising gradually in rear is always advantageous. Such a background will not serve to record errors of excess in range, but will materially aid in disguising works of defence. If, on the other hand, it is barren and rocky, and the parapet of the work is a bright band of well-trimmed turf, as in some existing cases, the gain will be minimized. The object should be to assimilate the work to the background. If the latter is rough, let the former be rough; if the hill in rear is bush-grown, plant the parapets similarly, and leave them to nature.

Guns should never show against the sky. Failing a hill background, therefore, plant trees or tall bushes, building a bank, if necessary, for them to stand on. If no vegetation will flourish, a rough wall, high enough to appear just above the guns at moderate ranges, and not too near so as to give back dangerous splinters, may be employed. Such a wall can be washed with any suitable colour. Mere canvas screens or wooden hoarding, coloured at discretion, might be temporarily used for the same purpose. There can rarely be any excuse for turning a gun into a beacon; and to provide (as at Inchkeith and elsewhere) a white concrete ground on which to place a black gun is to concede an unnecessary advantage to the attack.

### FORM

The form adopted in the design of a work will exercise a determining influence on its visibility. Rectilinear contours and models have been the curse of coast fortification.

If a design is made with straight line contours and sharp angles, the tendency in execution will be towards extreme fidelity. Profiles will duly be erected, and the result will be a structure like Fort Madalena, Malta, or South Hook, Pembroke, plainly labelled—"This is a Fort." Curved contours are now being employed, and it is generally recognized that great latitude must be granted to the constructor. Let him avail himself of it to the fullest extent, remembering that his contractor is almost certain to exhibit a preference for straight lines and angles. The measure of excellence in a model will usually be its neatness. Hence the model too often shows all the characteristics which a coast work should *not* possess. Ideas once formed are difficult to uproot, and the same species of mental demoralisation which results from a continued contemplation of obsolete guns, may be engendered by a model in itself a work of art.

As a general rule, therefore, interfere with the near foreground of the guns as little as possible. Sink batteries in preference to building them up. The presence of a gun at Buena Vista Site, Gibraltar, is advertised by the artificial mass built up on the top of natural rock. By leaving nature unimproved this gun might indeed have been invisible.

Abrupt changes of slope are invariably conspicuous, especially in sunshine. Since nature abhors straight lines, avoid a long straight crest above all things; it is never necessary—since a level row of guns, except in a saluting battery, is a thing of the past—and it frequently adds to the cost of a work by entailing unnecessary earth-movement. All geometrical forms are objectionable, as, for example, the carefully shaped cones, frequently formed with misplaced accuracy in front of salient guns. By omitting grading, and by planting, all such obviously artificial forms can be broken up and visibility avoided.

The flanks of a coast battery also require special treat-

ment. The exterior slope, seen in profile, frequently proclaims a fort for miles. Its outline can be broken without any difficulty whatever. Traverses rising above a parapet, with their side slopes showing sharp in profile, are always to be avoided. At Fort Madalena, Malta, there is a solitary traverse of this description on the long sea face, conspicuous enough for the leading mark of a ship channel.

There is no real inconsistency in maintaining the interior of a coast battery as neat as an artillery store, and leaving the exterior to nature. An exterior slope cannot be used as a tennis ground, and by abandoning the lawn ideal which is still upheld in some cases, invisibility will be promoted.

### COLOUR

The colouring of the guns is a highly important point. Black will usually be the worst colour that can be adopted ; especially if, as is generally the case, it gives off bright reflections. A dull mat colour is always desirable, but the tint should be varied to suit individual conditions. The dull white applied to the 100-ton guns at Malta is remarkably successful against the uniform whiteness of the background. It might be supposed that Malta offers conditions unfavourable to invisibility. The very reverse is the case. At Gibraltar, however, the background and surroundings of the 100-ton guns are brilliantly green in spring, and a greenish brown in the late summer and winter. These guns should be painted a greenish brown; the tint, in every case, should be rather lighter than the average depth of colour of the setting. Uniform flat washes are in nature only to be found in skies and English lawns, scarcely even in calm coast waters, which are generally heavily loaded with reflections. Guns should be spattered, therefore, rather than treated with a flat tint. However untidy their appearance may thus become, they can be kept equally serviceable, and will shoot none the

worse. The glitter on a bayonet is no evidence of its temper, and, when fixed to a rifle, it proclaims the bearer for miles.

Cement concrete has, from the present point of view, been the bane of the Engineer. A wall built of the stone of the country soon loses its visibility, weathering down to a mellow hue, and, where it is not expensively pointed at intervals, clothing itself with a rich garment of lichen. Hard rendered surfaces of cement concrete weather little, look like nothing in nature, and proclaim in terms not to be mistaken that the Engineer has been at work. Even at Malta, an island of white stone, concrete powerfully asserts itself, and insists on being seen.

In another case, a recent cartridge store with clean concrete surfaces stands out from a background of dark rugged rock, and can be seen for miles. This is as it should be, in the case, say, of a monument ; but does not fulfil all the requirements of a magazine of explosives turned towards, and within 2,000 yards of an enemy's possible position.

Devil's Gap Battery, Gibraltar, again, is a white concrete wart on the grey-green western slopes of the Rock. In this special position, it is hardly too much to say that a regulation blanket would be a better protection than this advertisement in concrete.

Bonnettes of stone or concrete are rarely satisfactory from any point of view. When, as at Fort Leonardo, Malta, they have *vertical* faces rising *eight feet* above the crest over which the guns fire, they stand condemned as being simply an artificial mode of increasing at considerable cost the dangerous target offered to a ship's fire ; while in most cases they add materially to the visibility of the guns whose detachments they are designed to protect. At Victoria emplacement, Gibraltar, on either flank of the 100-ton gun there is a trapezium of glaring white concrete slope, set in a luxuriant growth of vegetation. If the great

gun could be rendered absolutely invisible by any process of enchantment, these slopes would serve to show an enemy's No. 1 exactly where to aim. To bisect the distance between two closely adjacent, sharply outlined symmetrical targets, is an even easier process than laying the sight directly on an object less well defined. If these objectionable slopes had any protective value, their presence would be partially excused. As it is, they are shams—mere screens a few feet thick with no mass behind them. Earth would have been positively less dangerous to the gun, apart from the fact that invisibility would have been secured by its employment.

Concrete can be darkened by an admixture of soot ; which, however, if introduced in sufficient quantities to produce much result, would materially diminish its strength. It can be tarred and sprinkled with earth or sand, much of which would soon wash out in a rainy climate, and leave a surface which would gleam in the sun like a looking glass or a slate roof. If painted, the oils sink in and leave a nearly indelible stain. But here also flat tints are inadmissible. Blotching with a large brush is required, which will not merely lower the tone to any desired pitch, but will break up the flatness of the surface, obviate uniform reflection, and secure assimilation to any surroundings. Concrete not rendered weathers to some extent, and soon becomes less glaring.

Granting—for the purposes of the present argument only—that it is necessary to carry up the concrete mass covering a gun emplacement to the plane of the superior slope, the effect is usually a glittering white line, directly under the muzzle of the gun, broadening in proportion both to the depression provided, and also—within limits—to the range from which it is viewed. Here again, artificial colouring can be resorted to with excellent results, although, as will be noticed hereafter, vegetation may in some cases be even more effective.

## FOREGROUND

The railway embankment treatment of parapets has been already pointed out as undesirable ; it remains to deal with the question of the foreground in advance of the so-called " exterior slope "—a term which might with advantage lose its literal accuracy in connection with most defence works.

The ditch constitutes, in some cases, an effectual advertisement of a fort or battery. There will be another straight defined line drawn parallel to and under the crest. Perhaps the top of the scarp exhibits a broad band. At the Needles battery the ditch is visible for miles. At Newhaven even the flanking arrangements are frankly exposed, and there is a caponier generously posing as a target. At Rinella Battery, Malta, the ditch helps to tell the tale. As Colonel Schaw has lately pointed out, the divorcing of the ditch from a too rigid alliance with the parapet is no new proposal ; but Choumara has at present found few apostles in England, where we have perhaps been unnecessarily generous in the matter of excavation. We have ditches with virtual precipices a short distance in advance of them ; others, again, closely following the edges of cliffs. Carlisle Fort, Cork Harbour, has a ditch of monumental proportions, which is said to have been the grave of the fortunes of successive contractors. A part of this ditch serves to enclose a narrow ridge at the top of a natural cliff, and gives rise to the probably unique phenomenon of a piece of infantry parapet facing the sea suddenly changing into one facing the other way, without any alteration of alignment. Some ditches seem to be built up much on the Hibernian plan of casting a gun—" you take a hole and pour molten iron round it." No. 2 battery, Inchkeith, has a land front ditch, duly flanked ; but there is nothing to prevent a whole ship's company walking up the natural slopes in front of the work. Brean-



down, Severn defences, has a well-flanked gorge ditch; but almost any old woman could walk into the work from the front. Fort Langton, Bermuda, a little bit of a work, has six flanking chambers, and only just escaped having twelve. A commanding officer, not desiring to have two-thirds of his little garrison permanently quartered in the ditch when danger threatened, would be likely to block up the entrance galleries tightly, and leave the ditch for the enemy to get into—if he liked.

In advance of the ditch, we have perhaps a long graded glacis, sometimes—but not always—a legacy of the days of the “percussion musket,” or flint-lock. All these things make for visibility. Progress, the breech-loader, and the machine gun, will simplify the task of the designer aiming at concealment. Accept the necessity for a ditch, even if unflanked, and the glacis beyond may be left to nature. Where guns are on a steep bluff, a little scarping here and there—not a regularly traced line—combined with iron fraises or palisades—not necessarily continuous—will frequently be considered amply sufficient protection against a boat party, which after all is composed neither of Alpine climbers nor monkys, and which, even if it succeeded in reaching the parapet, would nowadays be easier victims than the gallant Spaniards who escalated the back of the Rock of Gibraltar. If the Russians on Mount Nicholas, in the Shipka Pass, without ditches, flanked or otherwise, could repulse, latterly with stones, the brilliant attacks of the Turkish infantry, we with machine guns may count on equal success against an enemy’s bluejackets.

Thus the problem of invisibility will be simplified. Parapets may in many cases be effectively masked by trees. At Oscar Friedrichsborg Fort, the main defence of the channel of approach to Stockholm, this plan has been adopted with wonderful success. There is a high barbette battery commanding the water approach. Tall pine trees,

standing on what might have been termed the glacis, and spoiled accordingly, rise to the level of the muzzles. Viewed from the sea coast side, it is almost absolutely impossible to identify a single gun. Yet the fire is not in the least masked, and in the worse case the shells of the defence would easily tear their way through the light branches. It is true that there is a venerable legend to the effect that a projectile was, "once upon a time," turned up by blades of grass: but rabbits are not infrequently shot through grass, and even swede-tops, so that there is hope for modern shells opposed by pine-needles. All the minor defences of the Oscar Friedrichsborg position are equally well concealed. There are several other batteries among the trees which defy detection. Under the ordinary conventional treatment, they would have been magnanimously proclaimed from afar.

### PROMINENT OBJECTS

High chimneys, flagstuffs, or other well defined and prominent objects in the neighbourhood of guns, are to be avoided. Within limits, indirect laying on board ship is just as easy as any other mode of aiming, and such objects greatly facilitate it. At Alexandria the positions of the magazines were usually indicated by tall lightning rods, which, being in many cases innocent of any proper earth connection, were doubly objectionable.

### DISAPPEARING GUNS

The disappearing mountings, which it is hoped will be provided for some of the new B.L. guns will enormously facilitate disguise. Under most circumstances, there appears to be no reason why the positions of guns thus mounted should ever be identified, except by the flash, which is not an easy thing to lay upon. But much will evidently depend upon the design and construction of the works in which they are to be placed. At Flatholme,

Severn defences, the pits for the 7-inch Moncrieff counterweight guns are exceedingly well masked.

Similar concealment has not always been accorded to disappearing guns. In the middle of the Corradino Lines, Malta, there are two counterweight pits, built up high above the level of the crest line, and the most conspicuous objects in the neighbourhood. It seems hardly fair to *build up a pit*, as we have done at Popton and Hubberstone, and as the Egyptians probably intended to do, when they mounted their 9-inch counterweight gun on the open sea-shore. The Corradino Lines have the compensating advantage, however, of hundreds of yards of infantry parapet, 32 feet thick! At Newhaven Fort one of the 9-inch counterweights is placed in what is virtually a circular stone tower of vertical cylindrical form.

The dummy disappearing gun, employed in the Portland experiments last year, raised itself out of a stretch of natural down land. When this dummy was in the loading position, there was nothing whatever to indicate the site of what was thus a veritable *pit*; which partly accounts, no doubt, for the fact that the effect of the fire of the attacking ship was practically *nil*. Nevertheless, the conditions at Portland were not ideal; since, when in the firing position, the gun showed against the sky, while there were no scattered bushes which might be mistaken for it. The flag on the top of the splinter-proof sheltering the range party was officially reported, however, to be so remarkably like the dummy, that it was liable to be fired at.

### EXISTING WORKS

Very much may be done, at small cost, to diminish the visibility of existing works. The armour belt of Spitbank Fort has been painted in black and white chequers with admirable results. The ports which used to be bulls-eyes are now indistinguishable, and the prominent mass of the fort is reduced in tone. This treatment appears suitable

to all such continuous armoured casemates, the colour of the chequers being varied, however, to suit the prevailing tint of the coast line. It has been suggested that by a little vigorous scene painting, a casemated battery can be assimilated to a rocky coast. Fort Delimara, Malta, would be a good subject for this treatment. It is a shielded battery with massive concrete merlons between the ports. Standing above and by the side of a naturally weathered cliff, the Delimara guns offer as good a target as the captain of a gun's crew could desire to lay upon. The judicious application of a big flattening brush would change all this. The casemates at Camden and Carlisle lend themselves to similar treatment.

Where trees and vegetation flourish, very much can be done by well-considered planting, both in front and in rear of the guns ; while the painting of the latter in accordance with the principles advocated will materially aid in disguise. The guns in Kinghorn battery, for example, could thus be almost obliterated.

Concrete slopes can be painted, or a rough rubble wall can be built in front of them, and vegetation fostered. This, in the case of Devil's Gap Battery, above alluded to, as well as in that of several other works at Gibraltar, would promote invisibility to an unexpected degree. Screens of cork bark in front of guns have been suggested, and appear to be worth a trial. Creepers deserve every encouragement, and ivy is invaluable. These are but a few ways in which the prominence of our defences can be diminished, and a study of individual works from the point of view of the attack—not from plans—will not fail to suggest others.

Invisibility will possibly produce a loss of moral effect ; " Frowning batteries," will cease to be a term dear to poets and newspaper correspondents ; but, if it is the case that the mere appearance of his target is a matter of serious importance to the Wimbledon prizeman, the relative visi-

bility of shore guns may be expected to exert a determining influence in an action. It would be better, perhaps, if some defences did not "frown" quite so much.

All experience goes to prove that the appearance of the target proffered to the ship does actually exert an enormous effect on the accuracy of her fire. Concealment is thus a very real protection, none the less valuable because it is not to be measured in feet and inches.

There is nothing new under the sun, and no originality whatever is claimed for the views here advocated. It is occasionally desirable to re-state an ancient case.

## VIII

### THE FRANCO-GERMAN FRONTIER

(*"The Times," 18 February, 1887.*)

In 1887 anxiety for the peace of Europe was widely felt. There had been scabbard-rattling in Germany and another Franco-German War seemed not improbable. In these circumstances, I was asked to make a study of the frontier and of the military position generally. I was forced to the conclusion that, if France were again invaded, the line of advance would be through Belgium, and I outlined a plan closely resembling that of Von Schlieffen which was adopted in 1914. Three years later, in 1890, I was ordered to examine the Belgian defences—then under construction—at Liège, Namur, and at Antwerp. I reported giving detailed reasons to show that the defences of the Meuse and at Antwerp, in the absence of a strong field army, could not offer any serious resistance. And again I expressed the view that an invasion would take this route. Unfortunately, the French General Staff believed to the last that the main attack would come from the east. The wonderfully accurate forecast of General Michel in 1911 was ignored. "Plan XVII," which the "offensive school" had elaborated, was put in force and proved quite unsuited to the conditions in which the Great War began.

"THE Rhine," states a French writer, "is the veritable military frontier of Germany, her most serious line of defence, the natural barrier interposed between the Latin and the German races, which, in the interests of the peace of the world, they ought always to have respected. But," he candidly adds, "it has never been so." Few subjects of study are more fascinating than that of the successive changes of the frontier lines of Europe, but no writer has yet given it to the world. Which of the natural frontiers has shown the greatest stability amid the many

changes of the map? How far have ethnical boundaries followed those of nature? To what extent have the great wars of the past been the result of waves of races seeking a natural barrier? In what way has military progress, and especially the creation of the vast system of continental railways, changed the conditions of the past, and how will the new order affect the maps of the future? These are some of the many questions which await adequate handling. Meanwhile, present interest centres on the short strip of frontier across which France and Germany watch each other to-day—a frontier barely sixteen years old.

After Waterloo France shrank back nearly to the frontier of 1789, her command of the left bank of the Rhine ceasing however at the Lauter. This was the frontier through which three German armies broke in August, 1870, and the battles which ended the dream of French invasion were fought on the routes crossing the Vosges to the valley of the Moselle. The frontier of to-day, as laid down by the Treaty of Versailles, differs materially, and the difference would exercise much influence, over the early stages at least, of a new war. No Rhine frontier remains to France, who now faces Germany on a line, from Luxemburg to Switzerland, about 140 miles long as the crow flies, with a single marked salient extending to within 30 miles of Strassburg.

The present German frontier, after skirting Belgium and Luxemburg behind the line of the lower Meuse, enters the deep valley of the Our, which it follows down to the Moselle a short distance above Trier, passes up the Moselle, and making a detour to include Thionville and Metz, crosses the river, and bending to the south-east reaches the summit of the Donon in the southern Vosges due west of Strassburg. Thence it follows the summit ridge of the Vosges, and crosses the great gap in front of Belfort. In

rear of this frontier line lie on the north the rich plains of Crefeld and Köln, between the Rhine and the Meuse. Further south is the Eifel region, mountainous and sparsely inhabited, sloping steeply on the south-eastern side to the valley of the Moselle, whose left affluents have cut deep ravines, forming serious obstacles to military movements. Portions of this district are densely wooded, and the whole is poorly cultivated, has few roads, and would be quite unable to support any large body of troops. For military operations on a large scale the Eifel region is altogether unsuited, and, though no impassable barrier, it can certainly be regarded as a naturally strong portion of the German frontier. To the west of the Eifel district and beyond the frontier lies the Ardennes region, largely covered with forest and marsh, with few inhabitants or roads, and generally regarded as specially unhealthy. From the south-east bank of the Moselle rises the high and somewhat rugged plateau of the Hünsruck, prolonged across the Rhine in the Taunus range. The Hünsruck also is a difficult country for military operations, and, though fair roads follow the general line of its summit to the Rhine, it constitutes a formidable obstacle to cross-communication from the Moselle valley to that of the Nahe, which is nearly parallel. From Mainz to the Swiss frontier the Vosges range runs parallel to the course of the Rhine at an average distance of about 18 miles. The northern portion, known as the Harott, offers a considerable obstacle to the free movement of troops, and is divided from the southern Vosges by the depression of Zabern, over which the army of the Crown Prince marched in eight columns to the Saar, masking the small fortresses which lay in its path. South of the depression of Zabern the Vosges form a strongly-marked chain, falling steeply on the eastern side to the broad valley of the Rhine, and ending at the gap of Belfort. West of the Vosges the region between the Saar and the Moselle is less accen-



tuated, well cultivated, and possesses numerous good roads. In rear of all flows the Rhine, a great natural retrenchment or second line of defence, which the French could not now hope to pass in a single campaign.

Roughly speaking, therefore, the German territory between the Rhine and the French frontier divides itself into three mountainous districts—the Eifel, Hünshuck, and the Vosges, all more or less difficult for military operations on a large scale—and an advanced region between the Saar and the Moselle, over which great armies can be manœuvred with ease. The natural lines of approach to this advanced place of arms are the valley of the Moselle and the depression of Zabern. The main line of the German defences is that of the Rhine. Wesel, Köln, Coblenz, Mainz, and Strassburg are now first-class fortresses, covering important railway bridges and able to contain large forces—Strassburg, for example, requiring a war garrison of nearly 40,000 men. The minor defended points are Rheinhausen, Dusseldorf, Germersheim, Rastadt and Neu Brisach. In advance of this great fortress line stands Metz, a huge entrenched camp, the citadel of the region between the Saar and Moselle, with Thionville, about 18 miles to the north, forming a species of strategic outwork and guarding an important railway centre. Between these two frontier fortresses and the Rhine are Saarlouis and the naturally strong position of Bitsche, barring the railway lines, Trier-Saarbrück and Metz-Haguenau respectively. The Germans have not greatly sought to multiply fortresses ; but have diligently laboured to increase the cross-communications of the Rhine, while largely developing their railway system. From Wesel to Basle there are twelve railway bridges as well as about twenty boat bridges and several steam ferries.

The scheme of fortifications adopted unmistakably implies a bold offensive policy. The line of the Rhine has been made so strong that enormous forces would be

needed to besiege or mask its fortresses, while to ignore and penetrate between them in face of a gun-boat flotilla is practically impossible. But the object has been mainly to facilitate invasion on a given line by destroying the possibility of a retaliatory advance into Cis-Rhine territory. Not the least of the functions of the Rhine fortresses is that of serving as depôts of supply to armies operating beyond the frontier. Metz, the advanced place of arms, has an offensive far more than a defensive significance. If a victorious French army, operating from Nancy and Lunéville, could strike Saarbrück and the line of the Saar, Metz might be isolated, and would then, as in 1870, become strategically important only in proportion to the number of men required to girdle it and to the urgency of the need of through railway communication. On the other hand, Metz, as a great intrenched camp and military depôt within 170 miles of Paris, would afford powerful aid to the rapid development of an offensive campaign.

Turning to the railways, the preference given by the Germans to a bold offensive policy appears equally apparent. They evidently attach the greatest importance to the powers of strategic combinations which railways confer, and rely with confidence on the ability of their military leaders to wield those powers with effect. Neglecting the frontier territory north of Köln, two main lines of railway, one on each bank, closely follow the Rhine up to Mainz. There they quit the actual banks; but still follow the course of the river at varying distances up to Basle. A perfect network of cross lines unite them, providing a power of movement from one bank to the other and of concentration against the flank or communications of an invader which has changed all the conditions of the older wars. Between Mainz and Köln the river has been many times crossed by invading armies from the east and west; but the great game of hide and seek, which the German railways, supported by the great fortresses, have now

rendered possible to the strategist, has yet to be played. Numerous short branches lead towards the French frontier, especially between the Zabern depression and the gap of Belfort, and all along the Rhine valley troops can be moved with ease and massed with marvellous rapidity. The possession of this vast system, developed with so keen an eye to military requirements, confers on the German Empire an advantage of the first order. To possess such a system, and to know how to use it, is to hold many points in the game of modern war.

The Treaty of Versailles practically left France without any naturally strong line of defence against Germany. The line of French frontier fortresses begins on the left with Mézières on the Meuse, followed by Verdun, a great intrenched camp directly opposite to, and about 38 miles from, Metz. Between Verdun and Toul on the Upper Moselle there is a series of *forts d'arrêt*—Troyon, Gironville, Lionville, and Camp des Romains. From Toul to Epinal there are no permanent works, but the left bank of the Moselle offers good natural positions which could be rapidly strengthened. Further south the high ground on the left bank of the Upper Moselle is guarded by a chain of defences on the extreme right of which stands the fortress of Belfort. Supposing that France at the outset of war deliberately adopted a purely defensive policy, or was compelled to this course by the more rapid strategic deployment of the Germans, this is the line which would be held. In advance of it there are only the minor fortresses of Longwy and Montmédy respectively barring the railways from Luxembourg and Thionville.

It will be seen therefore that, apart from all questions of the relative available strength of the French and German armies of to-day, the initial conditions of war have materially changed since 1870. The strategic frontier of

Germany is now good in every respect. The chain of strong fortresses on the Rhine is unbroken. The railway system has been enormously developed. The advanced base has been pushed forward to Metz, 90 miles from the Rhine. The balance of natural advantages of frontier thus rests with Germany, and the strategic deployment which in 1870 took place between Merzig and Landau can now be carried out as easily on the line of the Moselle.

The conditions under which the last great war were begun are worth recalling at the present time. On the 14th of July, 1870, the Garde Mobile was called to arms and volunteers were enlisted to serve for "the duration of the war." On the 18th and 19th war credits for more than 500 millions of francs were voted and Marshal Lebœuf announced that France was *archi-prête*. Yet when, on the latter day, war was declared, no one complete army corps was ready to take the field, though the nominal strength numbered 393,000 men, with reserves amounting to 173,000. Of this total number about 230,000 men were employed as garrison troops, in depôts, or quartered in Algeria. The nominal available strength was, therefore, about 340,000, with 900 field guns. The intention of the Emperor and his advisers was to mass 150,000 men at Metz, 100,000 at Strassburg, and 50,000 in second line at Châlons. The Metz army was then to move towards the Strassburg force, and both were to cross the Rhine and endeavour to detach Prussia from the South German States. The neutralization of the latter was thus anticipated, and the early successes of the French arms would, it was hoped, lead to alliances with Austria and Italy. The calculated time for mobilization was twelve days from the 14th of July, and on the 28th the Emperor arrived at Metz to assume supreme command. On the 2nd of August the campaign was begun by a strong reconnaissance on Saarbrück.

On the German side the mobilization began on the

night of the 15th of July, and Würtemberg, Baden, Darmstadt and Bavaria speedily announced their intention to take their stand with the Prussian army. On the 19th the Parliament of the North German Confederation voted a war credit of 450 million marks. Although the German peace establishment was only 385,000 men, the army in the field early in August numbered about 520,000, with 1,500 field guns, exclusive of 364,000 men and 460 guns left behind in the garrisons and depôts. On the 3rd of August the deployment was complete, and the army commanders were able to report their troops ready to commence operations. During the period from the 16th of July to the 2nd of August the railways of Northern Germany transported about 280,000 men, and the South German lines 80,000. On the 4th of August a portion of the Third Army defeated General Douay at Weissenburg, and on the 6th the Crown Prince advanced from the Lauter to the Saar and defeated Marshal MacMahon at Woerth; while on the same day Frossard's Corps was beaten at Forbach by troops of the First and Second Armies. The French plan of campaign had utterly collapsed, and the three German armies were free to advance to the Moselle.

Up to this point, therefore, the fortresses had played no direct part. The French plan of campaign was that of invasion, trusting to certain political contingencies; but all possibility of the preliminary dispositions which invasion involved was destroyed in a few days by the unexpectedly rapid concentration of the German forces and the prompt advance which followed.

The after-course of the war was, however, in a great measure ruled by the French fortresses. Metz blocked a main line of railway, necessitating five weeks of labour in the construction of 23 miles of new line; while the investment detained 230,000 Germans till the 27th of October. Toul barred the line through Commercy to

Châlons till the 24th of September. Sedan—a position which the first Napoleon had absolutely condemned—decoyed a French army to destruction. Strassburg held a German force nearly 60,000 strong till the 28th of September, while its possession by the French entailed the partial demolition of an important railway bridge across the Rhine. Finally Paris endured a siege of four and a half months, entailing considerable strain on the German resources. These results were certainly of a negative kind; but in order that a country should be able to reap real benefit from its fortresses it is necessary that they should be of modern type, fully equipped, amply garrisoned by field troops, and, above all, that there should be a large field force able to manœuvre between and around them.

Not one of these conditions was fulfilled in France in 1870. Most of the fortresses had long been obsolete. The defences of Paris and Metz were incomplete, and their equipment was utterly deficient. At the outbreak of the war Thionville had forty trained soldiers in garrison, besides Gardes Mobiles and recruits! After the surrender at Sedan no free field army remained to France, and the hastily organized levies were no match for the solid German battalions.

The conditions of to-day are in all respects different. A German army advancing on Paris from the Moselle must pass through or break a chain of modern fortresses which bar all the railway lines running to the capital. It must be assumed that the equipment of these fortresses is complete; while the French dispose of an enormous *personnel* for their garrisons as well as for field armies. Adequately held, and *supported by the presence of large field armies*, the fortresses cannot be effectively masked without absorbing a heavy proportion of the invaders' strength. Certain German writers have argued in favour of attempting to storm fortresses at the outset of war, trusting to the defences being incomplete and the garrisons

unprepared. There is no modern experience to show that such a course is feasible, and it would in any case entail vast sacrifices. To maintain an army before Paris, however, through railways are a first necessity, and till the frontier fortresses of France are taken no line is available; but siege operations against these fortresses are undoubtedly facilitated to a great extent by the German railway system and the great military depôts on the Rhine.

Assuming then that the French are now in a position to reap the benefits of their fortress system, the task of invasion from the line of the Moselle is one of grave difficulty, and, in the absence of any false step on their part, it is not easy to see how the Germans could begin a campaign with the brilliant successes which marked that of 1870. Imagine the battles of the 4th and 6th of August eliminated; conceive that the three German armies had arrived before a Metz perfectly equipped, suitably garrisoned, and provided with provisions for nine months; that a French army 250,000 strong had held the line of the Meuse, with a reserve of 100,000 at Châlons; finally, suppose that Paris had been a complete fortress in every respect: all these things might have been, and who shall, in that case, lay down the course of the campaign? Yet, with certain reservations, these suppositions do not inaptly represent what might be the conditions of a new campaign; while the numerically greater *personnel* of the French army to-day, and the less distances to be traversed in concentration, should compensate for the slower mobilization which a system not strictly territorial entails.

Under all the circumstances, the temptations to turn the main defences of France and strike at Paris from the north would be very strong. Maintaining a strict defensive in Elsass and Lothringen—if necessary permitting the French to reach the left bank of the Upper Rhine—the mass of the German army could be hurled upon the Oise by making free use of the Belgian railway system. The

Ardennes and Eifel districts would afford considerable protection to the flank of the line of communications till the frontier was fairly crossed. The northern frontier fortresses are of little account. The distance from Valenciennes to Paris is only about 110 miles as the crow flies, and from Charleroi 130 miles. The line of invasion would, in this case, be that of 1815, and the weight of the French resistance would probably be developed in the triangle La Fère, Laon, Soissons.

Such a plan of campaign presents many attractions, and, provided that a convention could be arranged with or forced upon Belgium, the military difficulties appear distinctly less than those of an advance from the Moselle. Belgium has, however, none of the race antipathy which assisted in determining the action of Roumania in 1877; while the German fleet would be unable to protect the trade of Antwerp and at the same time fulfil its proper functions. Hence it is highly doubtful whether the necessary arrangement could be concluded without compulsion or a high bribe. In any case the effect of a victory would be to leave Germany with a permanent protectorate over the kingdom.

These contingencies are no mere dreams. In the giant struggle which a single false step on the part of either of two small groups of men may precipitate, it is at least certain that all considerations will yield to military expediency. The initiative would be seized by Germany, whose preparations have been long perfected and whose plan of campaign is already decided. Events would hardly accommodate themselves to the speed of thought and action usual in the Foreign Office, and it is necessary for British statesmen to decide in advance as to the course which the interests of this Empire demand.



## IX

### THE HIGHER POLICY OF DEFENCE

(“*The Times*,” 25 May, 1888.)

I select this article from among many written at a time when the great effort to restore the strength of the Navy, which led to the Naval Defence Act of 1889, was in progress. It summarises briefly some of the first principles of Imperial Defence, which I have striven during many years to make clear to the nation. Two years later Captain Mahan’s first great work, *The Influence of Sea Power on History*, made its appearance, powerfully emphasising some of those principles by copious historical evidence.

ADMIRAL COLOMB’s able paper recently read and discussed at the Royal United Service Institute deserves to be widely studied. A much-neglected branch of the great subject of national defence could not have been dealt with at a more opportune moment or dealt with by an abler hand. Panic of any sort develops unreason, and unreason means waste—for expenditure producing disproportionate results is simply waste, the inevitable Nemesis of reaction. Given a panic, skilfully manipulated, you can get almost anything you demand; but in the long run mistakes are usually found out, and the discovery once made invariably produces a dissatisfaction which shows itself in reluctance to accept even necessary expenditure.

On all grounds, therefore, it is desirable to place the demands put forward in relation to the defences of the Empire on a fair and intelligible basis. No amount of ingenuity in matters of detail can ever atone for the defects of a scheme of which the fundamental conception is wrong.

No tactical skill can avert the evils resulting from a plan of campaign which is strategically faulty. We have on many occasions shown a tendency to approach questions, both large and small, from the wrong end, and it is not difficult to ascertain the cause.

Master minds are necessarily rare. Able and zealous experts, capable of holding a brief with much show of force, abound. The balance is supposed to be held by a civilian Minister who of necessity knows nothing about the matter. The qualities which lead a statesman to Cabinet rank in this country are tending less and less in the direction which the right government of a great Empire demands. Good debating power, mastery of the details of local government or of finance, capacity for work—all these things are not only compatible with a total inability to understand the broad aspects of great military problems, but they may be associated with complete incompetence in the mere administrative work of a War Office or Admiralty. And it is possible to arrive at the head of either even without the possession of one of the attributes enumerated. Pitt could grasp and direct a vast military scheme. Palmerston was naturally gifted with something of a soldier's genius. But, of the public men of recent times, how many have arrived at the elementary proposition that the richest Empire in the world must needs be strong or perish, and that to weld the scattered members into one great whole capable of acting as such against a common enemy is a problem worth the labour of a life? Political distinction being obtainable at an infinitely cheaper rate, involving no slightest study of the relative strength of the Great Powers, no thought of the solution of the complex problem of Imperial defence, the result is not to be wondered at.

Under such conditions it is inevitable that what may well be termed the higher policy of defence has palpably been forgotten. Admiral Colomb's valuable essay has

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prepared the way for discussion on the only true lines by bringing sober history to bear upon the airy generalities which have been plentifully scattered around. The policy which has been successful in the past, which has brought the Empire not safety alone, but conquest, may apparently be our guide to-day. We are here on firm ground at last, and, starting from such a basis, it becomes possible to lay down the outlines of the higher policy above referred to.

The most cursory study of the various papers put forward from time to time, or of the reports of Commissions on questions of national defence, shows clearly the need for the substantial basis which Admiral Colomb supplies. He is naturally severe upon the Royal Commission of 1860, which he characterizes as a body "very badly constituted for pronouncing on the general principles of defence." Questions of higher policy were practically excluded from the charter of this Commission which had a huge system of fortification flung at its head, and was called upon to pronounce an opinion upon a mass of details. We had, in fact, begun at the wrong end. The question of higher policy was left practically untouched. Here was the greatest naval power of the age centred in a sea-girt isle possessing the proudest naval traditions. Clearly, in approaching any scheme of national defence, the primary *datum*, the basis of everything, should have been the part which the national navy might, judging from the past, be able to play in the future. The fortifications were needed only to supplement the action of the national navy. It was surely necessary to arrive at a definite idea as to what the action of that navy would be, before attempting to fix the standard of coast defence, still less to go down to details of batteries, forts, and guns.

There is no evidence that the Commission made any such effort, and it is certain that they were not officially required to do so. As Admiral Colomb points out, their

summary of the case gives no hint that the matter ever presented itself to their minds. That summary ran as follows :

“ Should any such catastrophe (defeat or dispersion by storm) occur, or should the fleet from whatever cause be unable to keep the command of the Channel, it appears to your Commissioners that the insular position of the kingdom, so far from being an advantage, might prove a disadvantage for defensive purposes, inasmuch as it would enable any superior naval Power or Powers to concentrate a larger body of troops on any part of our coasts and move more rapidly and secretly than could be done against any neighbouring country having only a land frontier ; and an army so placed could maintain its base and be reinforced and supplied with more facility than if dependent on land communications.”

It is scarcely to be wondered that Admiral Colomb takes exception to these remarkable *dicta*. If all this is true, what is the use of being a Great Naval Power ? One can conceive a Russian commission committing itself to these sentiments ; but for Great Britain, with her great and costly Navy and its glorious past, to accept them is incredible. It is even difficult to believe that they are seriously put forward. Put the French Navy away altogether and sever France from Germany by a stormy sea ; would the Commission really have contended that the Germans in 1870 would have been “ supplied with more facility than if dependent on land communications ”—i.e. on through railways bringing every resource of the invader into the heart of the invaded country.

Consider the vagueness of the speculations on which these Commissioners based a plea for 12 millions' worth of fortification—“ should any such catastrophe occur, or should the fleet, from whatever cause,” lose command of the Channel. What is the use of pretending to be a Great

Naval Power any longer if we place no faith whatever in our Navy, and by what right do we assume defeat? It is probabilities, not indefinite possibilities, with which we have to deal. With almost equal justice advocates on the other side might say, "Should your forts be unfortunately blown up at a critical moment by careless people dropping matches in the magazines, or should these forts prove to be quite unfit for purposes of fighting 'from whatever cause,' it appears to your Commissioners that in the last resort you have only the Navy to fall back upon."

The fact is simply that the Commission in question assumed the position of an advocate, not that of a judge, and the result of this mistaken identity was not unimportant. The report was drawn up in contradiction to a mass of the evidence. The whole cut-and-dried scheme of fortification was practically adopted; the standard of defence was wrongly adjusted, and the evil has hardly yet disappeared, although it is now widely admitted that the grandiose scale of land defence adopted at Portsmouth and Plymouth was not in the least suited to the real requirements of the country. No better evidence could be found of the fatal result of approaching a great question at the wrong end.

The Royal Commission of 1881-2 was directed to inquire into the protection of commerce generally, and was constrained, therefore, to touch upon the naval aspects of the question. This Commission reported:

"We have called attention to some of the various duties which in time of war will be required of Your Majesty's fleet, in order to protect the interests of the Colonial dependencies of the Empire and to afford reasonable hope that the commerce of England would still be carried on under the British flag. How far the Navy is equal to the discharge of their duties is a grave and pressing question, which can only be answered by a careful inquiry into the

relative strength of our Navy as compared with the navies of other powers. . . . We are deeply impressed by the returns furnished by the Admiralty, and to these, as well as to the other evidence, we invite the particular attention of Your Majesty's Government, feeling bound to express our opinion that, looking to the action of other countries, the strength of the Navy should be increased with as little delay as possible."

The Commissioners were not called upon to consider the defence of these islands or the functions of the Navy in relation thereto, but the words above quoted are significant of their views. Alas for the fate which crosses our procedure in such matters! The able report of the Commission was not published till last year. The plain words above quoted appear to have escaped notice, and action was taken only on the coaling station defences, with which alone the labours of Lord Carnarvon and his colleagues came to be popularly associated.

Again, take up almost any of the papers dealing with questions of defence or pleading for the fortification of London at any imaginable cost. Everywhere will be found vague phrases showing that Admiral Colomb's points have never been grappled with. "The command of the sea may be lost." "The fleet may be decoyed away or dispersed." Some undefined catastrophe may overtake it. "The fleet" is generally the term preferred, not the Navy of the Empire, existing and potential. Nothing is less clearly understood than what is meant by "command of the sea." In a sense the words are meaningless. Had the Northern States the command of the sea while the *Alabama* and her sisters could work their sweet will upon Federal commerce? Had England the command of the sea at a time when the capture of her merchant ships almost in sight of her shores was a matter of daily occurrence? Definition is essential or the issue becomes confused.

The command of the sea has no real significance apart from the question of time. If England has in home waters or in the Mediterranean a strength so great that no fleet which a hostile Power can assemble could engage with hope of victory—then, in those seas, England holds command at the moment, but conditionally, on the power of movement within a certain time. Were the British strength to be wedded to Spithead or Malta the command would be gone. Thus, the only definition must run somewhat as follows: The command in certain waters exists when, within those waters, no hostile fleet can count on the time requisite for a serious enterprise without a strong probability of having a superior force to deal with.

Admiral Fremantle in last year's manœuvres got clear away up Channel and ran into a trap. The papers announced the "Capture of the Nore," whatever that might mean. Had he, then, the command of the Channel? Assuredly not, for he did what no enemy dare dream of doing. He placed himself in a position in which he was certain, within a fixed and limited period, to have a stronger force down upon his rear; he was even at a place whence he could not retire at all tides. But would he have sunk captured ships and fortified himself at Thames Haven? Most certainly not, for no British ship of any kind would have been ready to his hand. He dare hardly engage the defences of Sheerness, for he might get roughly handled, and, besides, he knew that he had Admiral Hewett behind him coming up at speed with full magazines.

"The fleet then being out of the way . . . destroyed, defeated, and driven off to shelter and refit, or decoyed away"; this is the major premiss of Sir C. Nugent's paper, read and discussed at the Royal United Service Institution last February. Starting therefrom, he draws a sufficiently gloomy picture of our prospects of defence. The military ports "have been completed, with the exception of the

armament for seven years ; and on the land side—well, you can walk round the land fronts and see for yourselves, as I daresay every foreign Military Attaché has done over and over again.” The garrisons ? “ My firm belief is that if you beat to quarters at this moment you could not open fire over the whole sea-front of Portsmouth : I doubt if you could in six days—I was nearly writing six weeks.” Even the Martello towers, sad to say, have “ in many places . . . decayed away, partly destroyed by the sea and partly in consequence of the supineness of the authorities.”

This, then, is the practical outcome of the fortifications of the Commissioners of 1860. The defences could not offer any resistance—in Sir C. Nugent’s view—and the reiterated argument of the economical advantage of coast works apparently breaks down altogether. If the Commissioners’ millions had been put into ships they would at least have been able to fight, even if only to be “ defeated and driven off ” ; they must have been seaworthy or they could not be “ decoyed away.” Starting from such a basis as this, there is but one logical deduction, which, however, most of our teachers shirk—conscription and a home standing army of at least 300,000 men. The sense of the country, however, is sound in the main, and there are some who cherish a belief in the power of the Navy still. It may be defeated—if you have fixed its standard too low. That is your own fault and you must rectify it at once. Even at its present strength it will surely be able to account for most of the ships of any single Power. The decoy theory has grown into a parrot cry, so often repeated as to be half believed in, and Admiral Colomb did good service in exposing the fallacy of the stock instance. Nelson was never decoyed to the West Indies, but simply followed his enemy there and back. The place of the British ironclads in the event of war is in face of the enemy’s ironclads, wherever they may be.



That place the British ironclads will take, and they are no more likely to be decoyed away, when invasion impends, than was the whole French army to be massed on the Italian frontier in June, 1870.

Fiction is sometimes more logical than serious writing. General Chesney, for the purposes of the "Battle of Dorking," recognised that the British Navy stood directly in his path and provided a peculiarly fatal torpedo for its destruction. A novel-writer wishing to dispose of impregnable fortifications would similarly invent a dirigible balloon discharging tons of *mélinite*, and would reach a logical conclusion thereby. On the other hand, the author of *Plus d'Angleterre*, also feeling the British Navy to be in the way, defeats it in the decisive battle of Abervrac'h. Four ironclads only remain to England; "the rest were either sunk or disabled." As the French have another ironclad squadron in reserve at Brest, the command of the Channel passes into their hands until Great Britain can build more ships or repair damages, and the landing at Hastings, followed by the advance on London, proceeds merrily. If the naval disaster of Abervrac'h were worth serious consideration, the deduction must evidently be neither the necessity for conscription, nor the conversion of Hastings into a fortress, nor the resuscitation of the useless Martello towers; but simply that the Royal Navy had been allowed to fall below the standard of its necessary and indisputable requirements.

By ignoring the Navy altogether, accepting wild possibilities, and forgetting probabilities, the case for a defence of London on the Antwerp scale can be readily made out. One great authority holds that England can be brought to her knees by landing 100,000 men. Sir C. Nugent recently stated that "no ruler in his senses would think of invading this country with less than 200,000 men." In the face of such diversity of opinion, what is the lay mind to think? Surely some closer approximation of views

can be arrived at if the matter is properly thought out. We know, at least, that Napoleon considered 178,000 men to be required, and that they did not arrive. Experts can calculate the tons of shipping required for a fully equipped force of 200,000 men. We learn from the Report of the Royal Commission of 1882 that the total number of French merchant steamers of 1,500 tons and upwards was ninety, a number which would not have conveyed the Egyptian expeditionary force of that year. At the same time the corresponding number of British steamers was, on the same authority, 1,039, "not including *Great Eastern*."

We know from the history of war the risks which will and will not be run in placing an army on shore in a hostile country. There are here *data* enough for a worthy discussion of the question; but in any such discussion Admiral Colomb's points cannot be shirked. He says in effect: "You have no right to leave the Navy out of the matter as you seem to do. Study what the Navy did for the defence of the country in the past and the principles on which it acted. Those principles are eternal. They are as applicable to-day as they were when Lord Howe and Lord St. Vincent applied them. If you do not know what the Navy can do for the defence of your shores we can tell you; but you have no more right to spirit away our ships than we have to assume the incapacity for fighting of your forts."

The higher policy of defence may be summed up in a few words. Decide first of all what Power or combination of Powers the Empire must be defended against. Responsible statesmen can alone say whether we are to prepare to fight two or more Powers, or whether we cannot as reasonably count on an effective alliance as any of our possible enemies. When this point is settled, and not till then, can the naval experts lay down ship by ship the strength of the Navy such that the command of the sea,

in the sense above defined, shall never be lost. However rigid the system of blockade may be, however complete the command of the sea, some of an enemy's fast ships will get away, and within the limits of their speed and coal supply they will be able to inflict injury. Here, therefore, fortification steps in and selected points must be defended, but defended merely against the only probable form of attack. If an enemy's ironclad squadron goes to the Cape, an English squadron can follow and will move with far greater ease. Home ports also, in which serious national injury can be inflicted in a few hours by an adventurous raider willing to accept risk, claim defence on a similar scale. This is no question of "fortifying the coast in order to set free the Navy"—set free the Navy to do what? merely to act against the only force which can seriously threaten that coast—but of supplementing the defence which the Navy can and will give by providing against the swift raids which no command of the sea will entirely prevent. The corsairs of the sea must be fairly hunted down by our own cruisers based on the coaling stations, and for one privateer fitted out from an enemy's port Great Britain must and easily can fit out six.

The changed conditions of naval warfare are all in favour of the Power which holds half the points of vantage of the world, and which can build iron ships at a rate which the foreigner cannot approach. For many years the national policy has been enfeebled by the want of that intelligible basis which Admiral Colomb now suggests. The time has surely come to consider questions of Imperial defence from the higher standpoint.

## X

# THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE WAR OFFICE

(*"The Times," 10 December, 1891.*)

This is the last of the six "Letters of Vetus," which made some stir at the time and may have helped to draw public attention to the chaotic conditions afterwards revealed by Lord Elgin's Commission on the conduct of the South African War. The preceding letters were devoted to a full explanation of the confusion of administration then reigning at the War Office. The last was an attempt to replace this confusion by an ordered system based upon certain principles. It was faulty in some respects, mainly because I dared not—in 1891—propose the abolition of the Office of Commander-in-Chief, which Mr. Balfour's Government decided upon in 1903. It may be pointed out, however, that many of the features of these proposals were adopted by the Esher Committee of 1903-4—Lord Esher, Sir John (afterwards Lord) Fisher and myself. They have since governed the higher administration of the Army, and they held the field during the Great War; for example, the executive command of the Army was finally taken out of the War Office, and a "Council (Committee) of Imperial Defence," a War Office "Council," and a Chief of the Staff came into existence thirteen years after this article was written and became established features in our Army Administration, though little use was made of the Committee of Imperial Defence in 1914-18. Some other of my proposals in 1891 have also been adopted.

ALL efficient systems of administration conform to ascertainable principles. Such principles are independent alike of forms of government, of the nature of undertakings, and of the extent of the monetary transactions involved. They are eternal; their violation inevitably entails disorganization, inefficiency, and waste.

The responsibility and power of individuals must be

defined ; neither must ever be dissociated from adequate knowledge and experience, or permitted to be degraded into mere formality. This entails grouping of business into departments, each under a responsible head, such grouping being based upon the co-relation of services, and limited by the amount of work which one man can efficiently supervise. Sub-groupings—the drawing of horizontal lines across the diagram—necessarily follow, in order to allow the focusing of business at earlier stages and to relieve the head of the department of everything with which a responsible subordinate can deal. In this way only is it possible to create a real chain of responsibility, and to conduct business with efficiency and despatch. The War Office method of forcing questions through a succession of officials of increasing rank, and, perhaps, decreasing knowledge of the matter, leads directly to mistakes and delays. No official, unless formally charged with duties in relation to a given subject, should be permitted to intervene. Responsibility can thus be apportioned to individuals—policy to heads, details to subordinates. Nothing should be done at the central office which can be better dealt with locally ; delegation and decentralization of power are paramount objects. Correspondence should follow fixed and unchanging lines, should be reduced to a *minimum*, and should never supplant personal conference. Decisions should be recorded in the name of the official responsible for making them. The working of the system should be tested by efficient inspection. These things are among the axioms of sound administration ; all appear to be neglected at the War Office.

The London and North-Western Railway may be taken as an example of an excellent administrative machine, manipulating in each year a revenue of 10½ millions sterling, and dealing with more than 55,000 men, whom it trains successfully for difficult and important duties. “ The secret of organizing the management of a great service,

such as this," writes Mr. Findlay, "is nothing more than a carefully-arranged system of devolution, combined with watchful supervision." Decentralization begins at the head, where the whole mass of business is divided up amongst six committees of the Board. The executive management is vested in three officials—the General Manager, Chief Goods Manager, and Superintendent. Administration is carried out by dividing the line into ten sections, each under the control of a district superintendent. Monthly conferences of the principal officers are held, under the General Manager and the Chief Goods Manager respectively, at which all matters relating to these two great departments are discussed, and recommendations are framed and printed for the approval of the Board. The system of inspection is complete; "nothing is left to chance or to the possible carelessness of subordinates, but a jealous watchfulness is constantly exercised to ensure that all the necessary precautions that experience has dictated and authority has laid down are thoroughly and effectually observed."

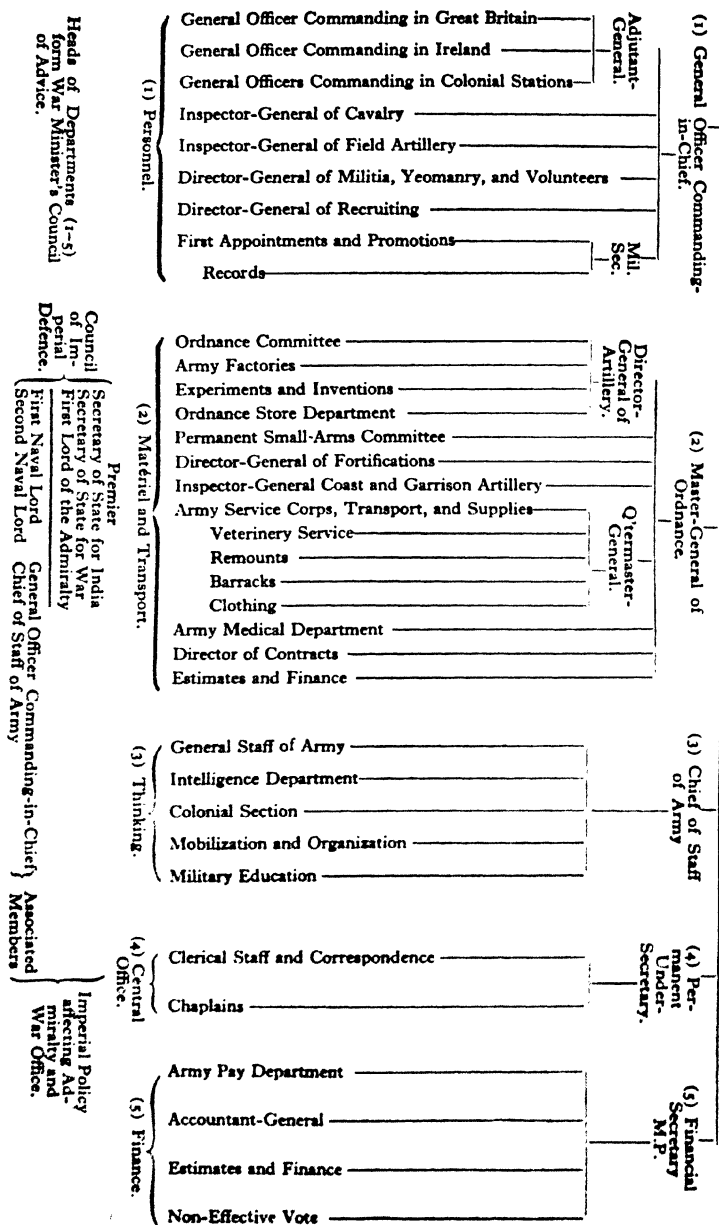
Such, in brief, are the principles upon which one of the most successful undertakings of the age is based. This great railway system annually conveys 57 million passengers and 36 million tons of goods. If it were administered on the lines of the War Office, where correspondence is indiscriminate, devolution unknown, centralization supreme, and inspection a farce, the certain results would be a holocaust of passengers and swift bankruptcy.

Following the analogy of the administrations of all Great Powers, of India, and of private corporations, I have sought to frame a system which embodies great principles, conforms to the ordinary methods of business, and which, if carried out, would in time remedy the ills under which the British Army helplessly labours. The accompanying diagram will explain the general features of such a system :

# DIAGRAM ILLUSTRATING PROPOSED ORGANIZATION OF THE WAR OFFICE.

SOVEREIGN.

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR.



The Secretary of State is responsible to the Crown, through the Cabinet, and to Parliament for the efficiency of the Army, and of that he is the responsible administrator. All high patronage, all military honours are dispensed by the Crown on his recommendation. There is no communication between the Army and the Crown except through him.

To advise the Secretary of State in an individual and in a collective capacity, five heads in the War Office are provided—three military and two civil. These high posts are filled by selection, on the responsibility of the Cabinet, which now appoints judges, bishops, and commanders of armies in the field. The chance of ill-advised or of interested selection will certainly be no greater in the one case than in the other. No Cabinet will dare to appoint, no Secretary of State for War will dare to nominate, incompetent officers for positions which carry great and direct responsibility—officers who will be the sole advisers in matters relating to their respective spheres.

The five members of the War Office Council are co-equal. Of the three military members, the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief and the Chief of the Staff of the Army are appointed for five years, with a possible extension of two years as a *maximum*. The Master-General has a five years' appointment, renewable for a similar term. All these posts carry the acting rank of general, and there is nothing to prevent their being held by officers of lower grade, if specially fitted for the duties. Thus the tendency to estimate genius in proportion to military rank—that curse of all armies in which selection is inoperative—would be averted. Neither military rank nor success in the field necessarily implies administrative capacity.

The five heads in the War Office are directly responsible to the Secretary of State for the administration of their offices, in which every new subordinate is appointed on their recommendation. They are the sole responsible



advisers of the Secretary of State on all questions relating to their departments, and they alone have direct access to him. In grouping duties under the five heads, I have followed well-established precedents. In the armies of all Great Powers, and in India, supply is kept entirely separate from matters of *personnel*. This essential distinction was preserved at the War Office until the recent disastrous innovations. Again, every Great Power in Europe has a Chief of the General Staff, whose special functions are to watch over the organization and the preparation of the army for war. This officer was regarded as necessary by the great majority of Lord Hartington's Commission.

The five departments stand as follows :

1. *The General Officer Commanding-in-Chief* is solely responsible to the Secretary of State for the *personnel* and discipline of the whole of the combatant branches of the Army. The recent absurd attempt, which the Duke of Wellington would have opposed with all his strength, to mix up questions of finance and estimates with these duties is swept into deserved oblivion, as also is the monstrous system, strongly condemned by the Royal Commission, of vesting in the War Office the executive command of the troops in Great Britain. The command of these troops is conferred upon a general officer. All general officers commanding at home and abroad report to the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, through the Adjutant-General ; but increased powers are conferred upon them, and they carry out, on their own responsibility, everything on which a reference to head-quarters is not absolutely necessary. The General Officer Commanding-in-Chief will inspect the forces, not only in Great Britain and in Ireland, but also in the Mediterranean. High officials of the head-quarters staff will no longer take the field on every opportunity. In the event of a great war, the General commanding in Great Britain, being originally selected

with that object, would assume command ; his experience, gained by actually handling troops at manœuvres, will enable him to feel and to inspire confidence. The command of minor expeditions would naturally fall to the General Officer at Aldershot. The Chief of the Staff of the Army and a portion of his officers would serve in larger expeditions, a portion only of his staff in smaller wars. No other officer would leave the duties of his appointment, and not only would dislocation of administration be prevented, but the promiscuous descent of unfamiliar officers upon a field army would cease.

In accordance with the German organization, Inspecting-Generals of Cavalry and of Field Artillery are appointed, who report direct to the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief. All appointments and selections up to regimental commands are made on the recommendation of that officer, who, conjointly with the Chief of the Staff, recommends the selection of general officers.

2. *The Master-General of Ordnance* is responsible to the Secretary of State for manufacture, supply of all kinds, and for transport. He is responsible for the preparation of his estimate, which is separately presented to Parliament. Portions of his great and important duties are grouped under the Director-General of Artillery. The Master-General might be provided with a naval assistant, to facilitate communication with the Admiralty, watch over naval interests, and avert the misunderstandings which correspondence frequently creates. The Quartermaster-General, among other duties, supervises the Army Service Corps, which will then again take its proper position in relation to the Army—the position allotted to analogous bodies in every civilized military force, as well as in our own till the dangerous change recently introduced. For the same reasons the Army Medical Department—a purely civil body—has been transferred to the department of the Master-General. A permanent

Small Arms Committee, necessary in all respects, is added, as in Germany.

3. *The Chief of the Staff of the Army* is responsible for the "thinking" branch of the administration, to employ the apt phrase used by General Brackenbury in his evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons. All reforms in organization would be considered, if not initiated, by him. He is further responsible for advice as to the general standard of defence of all ports, at home and abroad, and for plans of mobilization. There is a special section in his department, whose duty lies in watching over the requirements of the Colonial troops, a body growing in numbers and efficiency. Their importance seems at present to be under-estimated at the War Office, where the Intelligence Branch alone appears to acknowledge their existence. The education of the Army and the Intelligence Department are under the Chief of the Staff, and he administers the General Staff.

4. *The Permanent Under-Secretary*, as the chief of the bureau of the Secretary of State, is responsible for the administration of the clerical staff of the office and of the Chaplains' sub-department. The regulation, distribution and central registry of correspondence rest with him, and letters to and from all other State offices pass through his hands.

5. *The Financial Secretary* retains his existing duties, except that the Ordnance Factories and the Director of Contracts are naturally transferred to the Master-General, and that the Army Pay Department—a purely civil branch, however it may be recruited—is administered by him. He is responsible for financial order within the War Office, for audit and account, and for the framing of all estimates, except those of the Master-General.

These five principal officers, forming the Secretary of State's council of advice, will be able to support even a

newly-appointed Minister, collectively as regards military policy, individually by expert knowledge of the needs of their respective departments. All proceedings and decisions of this council are to be recorded in print. A decision having been taken and approved by the Secretary of State, the whole responsibility for carrying it out rests upon the heads of the departments concerned. The three military heads each address annual reports to the Secretary of State, which, if called for, will be presented to Parliament.

Great questions of Imperial policy arise from time to time ; many such now require settlement. To meet this requirement a Council of Imperial Defence, under the Prime Minister, is provided, with four associated representatives of the Admiralty and War Office. Such representatives have no vote, no power, and no responsibility except for advice given. They are added to the Council in order to bring the Cabinet face to face with professional opinion. Had such a Council existed in 1884, General Gordon might have been saved.

The same four officers form a permanent inter-departmental committee, for dealing with minor questions jointly affecting the Navy and Army. By this means, and by communication between the Chief of the Staff and the First Naval Lord, as proposed by Lord Hartington's Commission, ample facilities are provided for the exchange of opinion between the administrations of the two Services. Much has been written as to the necessity for planning "combined operations" between the Navy and Army. The term has an attractive sound, but, on examination, proves to have little meaning. In the case of a nation so circumstanced as ours, little or nothing of value can be done in this direction. If the Navy and the Army are alike ready for war, the Imperial needs will be readily met, and "combined operations," when they become necessary and possible, can be effectively organized.

Correspondence between the five departments of the War Office is rigidly restricted. Personal conference replaces futile discussions on paper, which lead only to verbal misunderstandings, obstruction of business, and inflation of establishments. All decisions taken by the Secretary of State are, however, transmitted in writing or by printed minutes to the head of the department concerned, thus conferring authority upon him, and distinguishing that authority from the powers he wields in his own department. The importance of correspondence, duly regularised, cannot be overrated, and in order to convert the War Office into a State administration, capable of efficiently conducting business, a complete revision of the existing system is imperatively demanded.

One other vital point remains to be noticed. The general outlines of the reformed administration, the powers, responsibilities, and position of the heads of departments, and the main grouping of business should be laid down by Act of Parliament. In the future it must be rendered impossible for a Secretary of State, however well-intentioned, to rear, on his own authority, without the previous knowledge of Parliament or the country, such a crazy edifice as that shown in the diagram attached to my letter of the 19th of November. Changes outraging great principles must not be within the power of a single Minister, acting on casual and irresponsible advice. On Parliament alone, which contains members perfectly capable of understanding matters involving no military technicalities, should rest the responsibility for organic alterations in War Office administration.

The outlines of my proposals have now been given. When the distribution of business and the responsibility of the heads of departments are fixed, the details can be filled in by anyone with a grasp of administrative methods. It will scarcely be asserted that these proposals are not sufficiently definite, or that they do not constitute a real

attempt to remove the intolerable evils which I have previously described. A tremendous responsibility rests upon the Secretary of State for War in regard to duties which, under present circumstances, he is impotent to discharge. I have shown how he can be provided with advisers, to whom direct responsibility for advice and for administration can be brought home. At the same time, the independence of the Minister is made as complete in practice as Lord Hartington's Committee states that it is in Constitutional law. Following the general lines laid down by a Royal Commission, whose report nestles peacefully in its pigeon-hole, I have gone further than the report in the direction of definition of duties, yet not so far in that of innovation. Mr. Campbell-Bannerman need not fear that such a Chief of the Staff as is now proposed can become that War God which his imagination has pictured.

I am aware of the criticism with which these proposals will be met. It will be said that the establishment of co-equal heads of departments would conduce to friction, thereby implying that officers of the British Army are incapable of the loyalty to an administration shown by the Naval Lords of the Admiralty, by civilians of every degree, and by the military officials of other Powers. It will be argued that responsibility cannot be dissociated from complete command of the purse, as if large and small sums were not alike capable of being well administered. To the many who proclaim that the Army requires only more and ever more money, the reply is obvious—"First, produce an efficient army, however small, in return for the vast sums annually entrusted to you. Then, if it is proved necessary, and you are proved worthy, the country will willingly entrust you with more." The hopeless class of persons who affect to trace the ills of the Army entirely to our system of Parliamentary government are beyond the reach of reason. Must we assume that they prefer a

constitution like that of France, which at least has created an army beyond the wildest dreams of the Second Empire ?

My task is accomplished. Advisedly I have refrained from touching upon questions of organization or supply of men. The latter is a question of the labour market, and when the aggregate yearly waste, the superfluous staffs and superior officers, and the abuses of the good service pension list have been abolished, funds will be available for increase of pay to such portion of the rank and file as it may be desirable to retain, to leaven the mass of generally young soldiers. I do not for a moment pretend that the adoption of the administrative reforms which I urge would at once provide the nation with a well organized army, trained and equipped for war. A species of moral regeneration must first be accomplished. Present habits of thought and present prejudices must be submerged in a widespread patriotism, which places the national good above every personal consideration. It is this sentiment which lies at the root of the military greatness of Germany. I do assert, however, in the strongest terms, that no such regeneration, no efficient and trained army, no economy of the national resources are possible until the administration of the War Office has been placed on a sound basis. Till this work is accomplished no addition to Army Votes will amend palpable evils, and none should be permitted.

I regret that I have been compelled, as the result of my investigations, to touch many susceptibilities and arouse many resentments. This was inevitable. There are times when patriotism demands that truths, however unpleasant, shall not be shirked. Effective War Office reform will never arise from within, and the only lever available is that of educated public opinion, to which I therefore appeal.

## XI

### THE WAR IN THE EAST

(“*The Speaker*,” 22 September, 1894.)

This is one of many articles, of which twenty-five appeared in *The Times*, in which I dealt with the Sino-Japanese War. In some quarters, there was a disposition at the time to believe that the strategy of the Japanese was rash, and that the “steam roller,” of which we were to hear twenty years later, would eventually come into operation for their destruction. I had carefully studied the organization of the Japanese Navy and Army, and I could not take this view. The War of 1894 is important in its revelation of what an Eastern nation, adopting the best of the naval and military methods of the West, could accomplish. It marks the emergence of Japan as a Great Power. Incidentally, some of the lessons which I attempted to extract from the War were not learned in this country by 1914.

MODERN civilization has not changed the conditions of the past or modified the esteem in which physical force is held. Now, as in the times of the Romans, a nation, to be accounted great, must prove its capacity for waging successful war. Italy in 1866, the Second French Empire in 1854, are recent instances of this law; and it is to the credit of reconstructed France that she has so far remained content with the sense of power. Japan, the one really progressive Asiatic nation, has taken this lesson of Europe to heart, and whatever may have been the immediate causes of the present conflict, the knowledge that the rights and the sanctions of an independent Power are conceded only when fighting capacity has been vividly demonstrated undoubtedly prompted the invasion of Korea.

The demonstration in this case has been startling.



Neither United Italy in 1866, nor the France of Louis Napoleon in 1854, was able to give proofs comparably impressive. Asiatic races have always supplied splendid raw material. In the simplicity of his wants, in marching power, and in endurance of physical fatigue, the soldier of the East is a far superior animal to the best average product of Germany. In personal gallantry he is at least the equal of the Western. His military instincts are inherent ; with us they are largely the result of an education elaborately calculated to attain its object. A Pathan, a Ghurka, or a Sudanese Arab has senses which we, with all our training, cannot evoke in a London-bred youth, still less in a Dorsetshire ploughboy. Yet, with supreme advantages, the qualities which organized fighting forces require have generally been wanting in Asiatic armies. Had it been otherwise, we should not now hold India. With the swift advance of scientific invention, revolutionizing fighting weapons, the disabilities of the Eastern seemed to be relatively increased. The whole of the modern science of war appeared to be beyond his reach. He might provide himself with European armaments ; but his ideas of army administration and the manipulation of large bodies of men in the field must, it has been imagined, remain nearly as they were in the times of Alexander. An army is, after all, the reflex of a nation, and, as Von Moltke pointed out, it is the qualities of Germany as a State which have made her army the most formidable fighting force which has yet been created. The whole constitution of Asiatic peoples, their forms of government, and even their social conditions, have militated against their naval or military strength in the modern sense. If, however, an Eastern State should be able to organize itself on European models, and, availing itself of the splendid raw material, ready to hand, to create fighting forces as flexible yet as solid, as divisible yet as capable of combined action, as responsive to supreme direction yet as self-contained in its units as

a European national force, a new and formidable factor would evidently arise.

This is what Japan seems to have accomplished ; herein lies the lesson of the Battles of Ping-Yang and the Yalu. Even those who have had special opportunities for watching the development of the new army and navy of this phenomenal nation must feel surprise at the consummate skill with which the Korean campaign has, so far, been conducted. There were ample opportunities for blunders—just the kind of opportunities which an Eastern people might have been expected to take. Nevertheless, the boldness and the prudence, the strategic plan of campaign and the tactical execution, are alike admirable.

Realizing, as most Englishmen fail to do, the meaning of the command of the sea, the Japanese have employed their navy with absolute wisdom. Instead of uselessly knocking their heads against Captain Von Hannecken's coast defences, they have contrived to keep every Chinese port in a state of alarm, and to promote the building of more fortifications which will be of no value whatever. When at last a Chinese squadron came out of port, they attacked it without hesitation.

Meanwhile, with perfect correctness, they recognized that to strike a crushing blow in Korea itself was the first great object, and, availing themselves of the effective menace of their navy, they quietly poured troops into the peninsula. Imagination pictured innumerable Chinese forces sweeping down from Manchuria with a view to overwhelm the defenders of a position in front of Seoul. Victory after victory was duly reported at Peking as each small outpost affair occurred. The immense difficulties of movement which confronted the Chinese leaders were insufficiently realized. The latter, probably finding onward progress impracticable, occupied and fortified the position of Ping-Yang, hoping for reinforcements, and perhaps counting on a front attack. Upon Ping-Yang, therefore, three Jap-

anese columns quietly converged. Greatly superior forces, and the extreme probability that the Chinamen would merely await attack, reduced the risks of the operation. About the 13th September, communication must have been established with the columns which had moved across the mountains from Gensan, the other two forces being comparatively close. The process of distributing the forces could then be undertaken; and on the 15th the Chinese were engaged in front, in order to draw off their attention. Before dawn on the 16th all was ready, and the combined attack was delivered by which the Chinese were taken in flank and rear and utterly routed. The Japanese appear to have instantly launched a force along the route to Manchuria to overtake any escaped Chinese, to disperse any fresh forces on their way to Ping-Yang, and (so it is stated) to seize the northern passes, though a fresh Chinese advance this year appears out of the question. The whole operations could not have been better done; and the fact that the actual victory was an easy one in no way detracts from the merits of the Japanese leaders, their staff arrangements, or the gallantry of the troops. Compared with Ping-Yang, Tel-el-Kebir was an unscientific operation.

Details of the great naval action off the mouth of the Yalu river are still wanting, and some of the bare facts remain in dispute. Here, again, however, we are directly confronted with the new phenomenon. The navies of both China and Japan have been mainly built and armed in Europe. British officers have played an important part in their training. Their armaments contain guns of the latest type—one of the Japanese cruisers being, in this respect, in advance of any other vessel in the world. That the sailors of both nations would fight magnificently under favourable conditions was certain; that they—the Japanese especially—would prove capable of handling their complicated weapons was confidently believed. That either

would have shown a complete grasp of the principles of naval war might, however, have been doubted. An Asiatic, it might be imagined, will provide himself with the best modern weapons ; but his want of organization, and of discipline in the higher sense, will always prevent him from employing them to the best advantage.

It has not so proved. The Chinese, indeed, with a considerably superior fleet, containing four powerful armour-clads, utterly failed to use it when the demonstration of its power would have been decisive. Remaining within their fortified ports, they permitted the Japanese to pour troops at will into Korea. Goaded at length into action, the Chinese naval commanders conceived nothing better than to attempt to convoy troops to the extreme north-west angle of the peninsula, thus making a mere indirect use of their superior force. Not so the Japanese. Though busied with the transport and supply of the large force in Korea, they seem to have been perfectly alive to the possibility of this movement. Collecting all their available ships, they seem to have struck straight at the Chinese squadron, catching it off a lee shore before the disembarkation was complete, ignoring the boasted armour-clads, and compelling it to fight. Again, nothing could possibly have been better. It is too soon fully to estimate the results of this first great encounter of modern ships ; but it is at least certain that four Chinese vessels have been sunk or burned, and the prestige seems unquestionably to remain with the Japanese, who will be able quickly to repair damages, and are certain to attack again if their enemy allows them the opportunity. The sea-fight will teach many lessons when its details come to be known ; for, under such circumstances, the fierce fighting instincts of the Asiatic would be aroused, and he would endure unflinchingly a trial which might prove too severe for the more delicate nerves of Western nations.

What would have seemed wholly impossible fifty years

ago has thus been accomplished. An Asiatic nation has shown the power of organizing a navy and an army on the most approved models, of equipping it with the best weapons, of framing and consistently pursuing an excellent strategical plan, and, finally, of securing well-deserved success.

An island people of whom this can be said, who can handle and fight a fleet as well as an army, and who occupy one of the most important strategical points of the world, may go far, if some strain of Oriental weakness does not betray itself—if, that is to say, the structure of the nation is firmly wrought. The European Powers will have to take Japan very seriously, and the Treaties which seemed merely somewhat out of date last week now appear supremely ridiculous. It is extremely satisfactory that the important step taken by Lord Kimberley preceded the demonstration of the fighting capacity of Japan.

## XII

### OUR MILITARY REQUIREMENTS

(*"Fortnightly Review," 1 November, 1897.*)

The military expeditions of 1882, 1884 and 1885, of which I saw something from the inside, brought home to me the total unfitness of our military system to provide for its most probable needs, in spite of the large nominal total of troops maintained at great expense. Out of more than 530,000 armed men at home, we could not, in 1882, provide 32,000 without makeshifts of all kinds, disorganizing the system. Lord Wolseley and other high authorities drew attention to this outstanding disability. We were not organized even for small wars. This article was one of a number of efforts at this period to lay down definite objects to which organization could be directed. If the field forces here suggested had been in being in 1899, the course of the South African War might have been different. In the Memorandum of 31 January, 1906, which I laid before Mr. Haldane, I proposed that the Expeditionary Force held ready for embarkation should consist of six enlarged divisions, the composition of which was detailed, and three Cavalry Brigades. This provision had happily been made before August, 1914.

THE military problem which confronted Prussia after Jena was simple in its essence. To train the maximum number of men in the shortest time and with the least expense ; to organize masses with a view to their being rapidly placed on a war footing, becoming at once a fully equipped and effective field army ; to provide the means of reinforcing units in the field and also of forming reserve units to be brought forward if the occasion demanded—such were the conditions of the problem. It was ultimately solved by sternly applying the following principles throughout the fabric of the German nation :

1. Universal service.<sup>1</sup>
2. Short colour service, followed by a period on leave with annual training, and a further period in a great territorial militia.
3. Territorial recruitment and organization.
4. A completely decentralized administration.

With modifications in detail the above are the characteristic features of the modern European system, which provides Germany with a standing army of about 590,000 men, capable of being brought up to a war strength considerably exceeding 3,000,000 trained and organized troops. Such a system enables a small and poor state like Switzerland to place in the field at short notice an effective militia army of more than 200,000 men, backed by an available levy of 250,000 men, who could in a short time take their places in the ranks. Such a system fulfils the military requirements of the European Powers, each of which in war may be invaded, or must invade, across its land frontier. To all alike territorial security at home is the first essential. France alone is compelled to maintain a considerable force over-sea, and to contemplate the possibility of attack upon her outlying possessions.<sup>2</sup>

If the principles of the German system above defined are examined, it will be evident that a constant supply of men physically fit is assured by the first ; that the second ensures a complete initial training supplemented by periodical exercises which prevent the soldier from losing his military efficiency ; and that the third and fourth are essential to rapid and orderly mobilization. Whether a force composed of troops who have had little over two years of colour training will prove to be as solid as the

<sup>1</sup> This is frequently confounded with "conscription," which expresses a somewhat different idea.

<sup>2</sup> The African adventures of Italy are not likely to become a permanent element of her policy, and the loss of over-sea possessions would entail no real disadvantage upon Germany.

old armies of Europe may be doubted. There were, even on the German side, in the war of 1870-71, some ugly symptoms. On the other hand, this possible lack of solidarity is now common to most armies, and at least the Continental system brings into the ranks the pick of the physical and intellectual vigour of a nation by which its shortcomings may be mitigated.

The guiding spirit of the organic changes introduced into the British Army in 1872 was undoubtedly caught from Germany. Short service had proved capable of turning out masses of trained and highly organized men. In a modified form it must surely suit our requirements ! In following a principle crowned with startling successes we could not be wrong. The training of the German army was carried out by the service units. By revolutionizing the old regimental system, and linking together battalions, each half unit could supply the other half when serving abroad. By tracing recruiting areas, and building *depôt* centres, a *quasi*-territorial organization could be created to which the old constitutional force of Militia and the new force of Volunteers might be affiliated. The German Army Corps had proved a convenient subdivision of a huge field force ; it might be naturalized in this country. These were, perhaps, the leading ideas in the minds of the framers of the new military system which was inaugurated by a chorus of praise and of blame, alike discordant and indiscriminating.

In the twenty-five years which have since elapsed the Army has made marked progress in all directions ; but this progress is largely independent of the system, which possesses inherent defects quickly realized and increasingly serious. Neither in 1872, nor since, was there any attempt to define the requirements of the Empire. The system had thus no sure foundation, and was the result of a mistaken analogy. The military needs of the European



Powers differ radically from our own, and the merits of the Continental organization arise from conditions which we have not adopted and cannot adopt. It was not short service which gave pre-eminence to the German arms, but a far-reaching machinery which actuated the whole social structure of the nation. Out of the four principles above defined we have selected for adoption only a portion of the second. We have not established universal service; we do not train our reservists or pass them into a militia; our Army has not been, and cannot be, rendered territorial in the German sense; decentralization remains to be achieved. We have, in fact, taken a small portion of the German machine, and, having surrounded it with an incongruous assemblage of working parts, we vainly expect smooth and effective action.

The practical results of what Sir H. Havelock-Allan styles our "fatal system" <sup>1</sup> may be briefly described. It maintains with growing difficulty a force of 73,200 men in India, and 37,500 men in the Colonies and Egypt. The 110,700 troops thus provided are probably as efficient as any equal force in the world; but the garrisons of most of our colonial stations are necessarily deprived of all except formal training. Whether the quality of the drafts annually sent to India is such that the men at once take their places as effective soldiers, and whether the present method of supply is economical, the military authorities in that country are well able to decide. In any case the system broke down absolutely from the moment that the number of infantry battalions abroad began to exceed those at home, and makeshift arrangements were thenceforth necessary. It may be said that the system was based upon the theory that equality between the battalions at home and abroad would always be preserved, and that by raising new battalions the machinery could again be made to move. This, however, presumes that

<sup>1</sup> *Fortnightly Review*, July, 1897.

the establishment strength of the Army is to depend upon the exigencies of the system—a view which will certainly not receive general acceptance. Since the inauguration of the changes of 1872 about 2,600,000 square miles of the earth's surface have been brought under the flag.<sup>1</sup> Great Britain has become responsible for order in Egypt, and will soon have vast territories in the Sudan virtually under her protectorate. By what right was it assumed that the strength of the forces required to be maintained abroad was fixed and unvarying? Was it supposed that the expansion of the Empire had ended, or that the national policy would henceforth be made subservient to the new military system?

If, however, by arresting imperial progress or by creating new units whenever fresh responsibilities were accepted, the equality between the home and foreign battalions had been maintained, the military position of Great Britain would have been none the less deplorable. It is the very essence of the "fatal system" that the home army<sup>2</sup> should be converted into a huge depôt for the forces abroad. The linked battalion at home, recruited from immature boys, and annually depleted of its grown and trained men, ceased to be a fighting unit. "The line battalion in England which has a linked battalion abroad is unfit in every way to go into the field," and resembles "a lemon when all the juice is squeezed out of it." "Not a single infantry battalion at home is effective." "If we had to send a force on service now we could not send any regiments of the First Army Corps. We have never been able" to do so, "and I do not think we ever shall." These are the deliberate opinions of the most experienced officers of the Army given with a full sense of responsibility, and based upon unrivalled knowledge. Even, therefore, if at great cost, a temporary equilibrium between

<sup>1</sup> Lord Rosebery, at Edinburgh, 9th October, 1896.

<sup>2</sup> With the exception, until this year (1897), of the Brigade of Guards.

battalions at home and abroad should be established—"an equilibrium which . . . can never be depended upon, because it is always liable to be disturbed by the never-ceasing contingencies occurring in our colonies and protectorates"<sup>1</sup>—the country would remain without any field army ready for embarkation. Such being the results of a system established without any regard to national requirements, the all-prevailing disquietude which led to the unanimous protest of the service members of the House of Commons is abundantly justified.

On the other hand, that system has created a body of reservists who have served three, seven, or eight years with the colours, and this may fairly be regarded as a definite gain. These reservists are, however, not periodically trained, do not, as in Germany, keep touch with their regiments, and may be called upon to serve with any unit of their special arm. This is not a Reserve in the German or in any real sense; but, as the Commander-in-Chief has most justly stated, it is "as regards efficiency . . . something of a sham."

And further, the Continental reservist knows that he will be called to the ranks only in case of great national emergency, failing which and subject to such time as he must give to refresh his military knowledge, his position in civil life is secure. If the sham reservist is liable to be called up for small wars, his means of gaining a living are imperilled, and even without this disability men who quit the Army at twenty-five frequently find the struggle for existence sufficiently distressing. The creation of our Army Reserve is thus a gain which requires to be heavily discounted. It does not satisfy our most probable military requirement; it is not suited to the economic conditions of the country. The normal service exacted from the soldier is too short or too long—too short to attract him

<sup>1</sup> *Military Organization*. Field-Marshal Sir Lintorn Simmons, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.

to the Army as a profession, too long to permit him easily to regain his place among civil workers.

Even if additional battalions are created in order to restore the number of units at home and abroad to temporary equality, every line infantry unit at home will still be "unfit in every way to go into the field." It follows, therefore, that there can never be a force at home ready for the needs which may any day arise, and that, for the purposes of a small war, battalions must be hastily filled up by drafts from others which will then practically cease to exist,<sup>1</sup> or the Reserves must be called up. Either process violates every principle of sound organization. The one is destructive of regimental efficiency and of the territorial element; the other involves the employment of the Reserve for purposes for which it was not intended, and tends to make the Army unpopular. Moreover, since the home battalions contain on an average only about 300 privates above twenty years of age, and with more than one year's service,<sup>2</sup> each would, in order to take the field, require 600 men from the Reserves—men who, unlike the Germans, would, to a great extent, have lost touch of their regiment, and who would not readily fall under the control of young and unfamiliar non-commissioned officers.

For the Egyptian expedition of 1882 the following forces were embarked: <sup>3</sup>

From England	.	.	.	.	.	14,520
" " Reserves	.	.	.	.	.	4,362
" Mediterranean	.	.	.	.	.	7,558
" India	.	.	.	.	.	5,863
Total	.	.	.	.	.	<u>32,303</u>

<sup>1</sup> As Sir H. Havelock-Allan has pointed out, 189 men and 272 horses had to be obtained from other units to render 3 field batteries effective for service in South Africa. If the process had been carried further, the force of field artillery at home would have been temporarily destroyed.

<sup>2</sup> *Military Organization*.

<sup>3</sup> *Parliamentary Returns*, 10th March, 1883, called for by the late Sir W. Barttelot.

Both processes were, therefore, employed on this occasion, and in order to enable only 18,882 men to be despatched from England, 11,649 reservists were called out and 10,593 actually joined the colours. The only complete units were, therefore, sent into the field from the Mediterranean and India, and those from the former station could have received no real tactical training. The strain upon the system entailed by the provision, without any real hurry, of an expeditionary force of 18,882 men from Great Britain cannot be regarded as excessive; but it could only be met by a large call upon Reserves created for the purpose of a great war.

While there are in this country more than 530,000 armed and drilled men—a total never before equalled in time of peace—we have no available Field Army; since, for the reasons stated, the Reserves might bring up the depleted battalions at home to their proper strength of able-bodied combatants, but could not, as in Germany, immediately amalgamate with the young soldiers so as to form a fully effective fighting unit. The mobilized battalions would be swamped by men who had, to a great extent, lost touch of the Army, and time would be needed for the process of consolidation.

The neglect to recognize the vital necessity for the provision of a field force always ready for instant embarkation may be traced to several causes. The decadence of the Army after 1815 created a belief that a purely defensive policy had become inevitable. The Duke of Wellington, in his memorable letter of 9 January, 1847, to Sir John Burgoyne, seems to have regarded security at home as the only military object which he could then hope to attain. The Royal Commission of 1859, by laying down the astonishing proposition that an island State was more liable to invasion than one blessed with land frontiers, succeeded in diverting attention from the proper duties of the Army—the duties which throughout our long history

the Army has invariably discharged—and sought to impose on our military forces functions which have always belonged to the Navy. Meanwhile, science offered in rich profusion the weapons of passive defence—costly luxuries of fourth-rate importance to the British Empire, but attractive by reason of their technical perfections. It naturally resulted that offensive power, the real military requirement, dropped out of consideration, and that what Mr. Kipling finely calls “our far-flung battle-line” was ignored. Absorbed in fortifying ourselves on a scale which is not required if the Navy is adequate, and will prove absolutely delusive if the command of the sea is lost, we forgot to prepare to strike. Thus the growth of sedentary forces and of expenditure upon the multifarious demands of passive defence has been a marked feature in recent years, and has directly tended towards the dangerous enfeeblement of our mobile Army.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, with strange inconsistency, we have accepted the dictates of a forward policy in matters Imperial. New responsibilities are being incurred in various parts of the world which may at any time make heavy demands upon our military strength. Such demands will without doubt take the form of mobile forces, not sedentary troops or fortifications. On these grounds, as on all others, the present system stands condemned as inadequate and unsuitable. The most pressing military requirement is the provision of a field force ready at all times for embarkation.

The great difficulty which has beset our military reforms in the past, which still baffles the many earnest thinkers of the Army, and which confers unreality upon our too copious discussions and controversies, can be directly traced to the fact that the national requirements have never been defined by authority. We vainly beat the air. Having no ascer-

<sup>1</sup> While this year (1897) adding about 3,000 men to our deficient infantry force and a solitary battery to our scanty field artillery, we have increased the garrison artillery by no less than 3,600 men.

tained object at which to aim, we attack the problem in piece-meal fashion, argue in vicious circles, and uselessly criticize or formulate vague demands in accordance with our individual predilections. The process is alike futile and undignified.

To frame an organization suited to the national needs is no easy task ; but it is at least possible to define these needs with tolerable accuracy. Here in brief are the objects which might be placed before our many military reformers :

1. The maintenance in India and the Colonies of a force consisting, as at present, of—

Cavalry . . . . .	12 regiments,
Artillery . . . . .	{ 63 batteries,
	{ 64 companies,
Infantry . . . . .	73 battalions.

2. The maintenance at home in immediate readiness for embarkation of a field force of about 40,000 men, including—

Cavalry . . . . .	3 regiments,
Artillery . . . . .	20 batteries,
Infantry . . . . .	30 battalions ;

with a due proportion of Engineers and departmental corps. Considering that there are at home <sup>1</sup>—

Cavalry . . . . .	19 regiments,
Artillery . . . . .	59 batteries,
Infantry . . . . .	75 battalions,
Engineers . . . . .	45 troops and companies,

the above provision appears sufficiently moderate.

3. The provision of a field force to reinforce the army abroad and for home defence, capable of being fully

<sup>1</sup> Or will be when the recent augmentations are completed.

mobilized in a week and consisting of twelve divisions, and four cavalry brigades.

Of existing establishments there remain, after providing for 1 and 2—

Regular troops .	{	Cavalry .	16 regiments.
		Artillery .	39 batteries.
		Infantry .	45 battalions.
		Reserves .	78,000 men.
Yeomanry .	.	.	11,800 „
Militia—Infantry .	.	.	112,300 „

The only arm deficient is field artillery, which could be made up by militia batteries.

4. The provision of sedentary garrisons for naval ports and fortified harbours. For this service there are 9,300 regular (garrison) artillery, 18,500 militia artillery, 47,724 volunteer artillery, and 198,000 volunteer infantry. There is, therefore, an available force enormously exceeding the requirements of the sedentary garrisons and capable, after two months' training, of supplementing the field army.

In the above rough sketch the armed forces of Great Britain are grouped under four heads, corresponding to the initial requirements on the outbreak of war. In addition to the troops abroad a strong field force is provided, complete with commanders and staff, ready at all times for embarkation, and capable of acting over-sea in the event of a great war, fulfilling the demands of a small war, or of supplying a temporary increase to the foreign garrisons. Behind this there would be a considerable field army composed of regulars and militia, capable of being rapidly mobilized by divisions each in its military district. A divisional organization is preferred as being far less cumbrous and better suited to our requirements than the Army corps, which, in the German sense, never has existed and never will exist in this country. The sedentary force would be supplied mainly by militia and



volunteer artillery, and by volunteer infantry, who might be strictly localized. Provided that a few guns at each defended port are always held ready for action, the bulk of the armaments can with economy and advantage be manned by local militia trained each year and on the spot to their use. The greatest of our alarmists will hardly assert that, with our present naval strength in home waters, the ports of the United Kingdom can be attacked by a battle-ship squadron at the outset of war.

The above fairly represents a basis on which a military system might be framed. It may be faulty, in which case let some other statement be presented. In one respect only is it beyond cavil. There are at least four parts of the world to any one of which it may be vitally necessary to despatch an effective expeditionary force at short notice.<sup>1</sup> The knowledge that such a force stood ready at all times would exert a powerful influence in favour of peace, and would create throughout the country a feeling of confidence, now lacking, in our military preparations. At the same time the requirements of any small war would be fully met. It is the greatest of the many defects of the present system that, out of 110,000 regular troops at home, not a single effective artillery or line infantry unit is forthcoming in normal circumstances. Any examination of our nominal numerical strength and of the number of our cadres serves to reveal an astonishing disproportion between apparent military resources and the forces available to meet our war requirements. This can only be due to the fact that those requirements were not ascertained as the indispensable preliminary to the creation of a "system."

I do not admit, with Sir H. Havelock-Allan, that we are "deficient" in "brains to organize" the large military force at our disposal. There is plenty of available brain-power in the Army, which vainly expends itself in attempt-

<sup>1</sup> This was written before the outbreak on the Indian frontier, which supplies a warning of possible demands.

ing to solve an indeterminate equation. I do not for a moment underrate the difficulties ; but I assert that it is possible to create an organization which will satisfy our requirements as soon as these requirements have been defined by authority. The cause of the present deplorable unreadiness for war is to be sought not in the House of Commons, which freely grants funds shown to be needed ; not in the Treasury, which exercises no real control over gross estimates ; not in the Army, which is keenly anxious to attain full efficiency ; but in the fact that successive Governments have failed to supply the *data* essential to the framing of any system of military organization.

### XIII

## THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

(“*The Times*,” 15 August, 1898.)

This, the last of a series of articles, was intended as a brief sketch of the events and general lessons of one of the shortest of wars in which the naval factor was dominant. Between the manifold shortcomings of the American War Department in 1898 and the wonderful achievement of 1917, the contrast is startling. I was asked by the Naval Institute at Annapolis to write a review of the naval aspects of this War, which, as a soldier, I esteemed a high honour. In the Proceedings of the Institute, and in Brassey's *Naval Annual* (1899), I tried to treat the subject in full detail, which was not possible in a *Times* article.

WHEN, on 21st April, war between the United States and Spain was declared, few persons were so sanguine as to believe that it would be brought to a conclusion in less than four months. The task with which the Americans were confronted—to enforce the evacuation of Cuba—appeared to be encompassed by difficulties. The climate, the want of internal communications in the island, the Spanish garrison of about 110,000 regular troops, and the unreadiness of the United States to undertake military operations oversea, were formidable facts which seemed to point to the probability of a long resistance. It was absolutely certain that the enormous resources of the United States must ultimately crush their antagonist, but a year was not regarded as an excessive estimate of the time required to bring those resources to bear upon the operations of war.

That the war has been speedily brought to an end is due primarily to a single cause—the naval collapse of Spain. Sea power has again triumphantly asserted its dominant influence. On paper the Spanish navy was a fine force. Though relatively weak in battleships, it was strong in modern armoured cruisers, from which much was expected. The glamour of these cruisers lasted for a few weeks. It sufficed to create great uneasiness on the Eastern seaboard of the United States and to lead to measures which, as was pointed out, were superfluous if not ridiculous.

After a few weeks of war, the hopeless defects of the Spanish navy became plainly visible. The squadron in the Far East was not a serious fighting force, and the only redeeming feature on the Spanish side in the action of Manila was the gallantry of the *personnel*. The ships were utterly unfitted to oppose a modern squadron, and even if the state of the fleet in home waters had permitted an effective reinforcement to be sent to the Philippines, it was too late. The Cape Verde squadron, of which much was expected, proved to be deficient in every essential respect. It was unprepared for war; its engine-room staffs were incompetent; financial and other considerations rendered an adequate coal supply impossible. With difficulty Admiral Cervera crossed the Atlantic to meet with greater difficulties, and, after being credited in some quarters with a profound strategic purpose which never existed, he sought shelter and at the same time courted destruction at Santiago.

The naval game was then played out, and a new objective presented itself to the United States. The capture of Havana was a task, for the moment, quite beyond their powers. To take Santiago was a far easier operation. If successful, it would evidently demonstrate to the Government of Madrid that naval action in the West Indies was at an end, while the moral effect of the capture of a large

Spanish garrison would necessarily be considerable. Whether Admiral Cervera decided to remain in harbour and assist in the defence, following the precedent of the Russian fleet at Sebastopol, or to make a dash for freedom, the issue was predetermined. Only speed and a place of refuge at a moderate distance could have saved the squadron ; neither existed. The sea speed of the Spanish cruisers did not approach that which they professed ; in the cramped harbour of Puerto Rico Admiral Cervera would have been less secure than at Santiago.

In the Far East, the naval situation was cleared by the wholesale destruction of Admiral Montojo's force ; in the West Indies, as soon as Admiral Cervera permitted himself to be blockaded at Santiago, the command of the sea ceased to be in doubt. In both cases, therefore, the way was open to the employment of military force. The United States navy had accomplished its task, not by futile bombardments of indifferently fortified coast towns, but by the assertion of its supremacy on its own element. At San Francisco and at Tampa, therefore, military expeditions embarked to undertake operations of precisely the same nature as those carried out by the Romans against Carthage or Syracuse. The vigour shown by the United States naval authorities, and the high qualities of the naval officers—qualities inherited from the mother State—sufficed to counteract the effects of un readiness. The strain thrown upon the American navy was not serious ; but the way in which large numbers of warships and auxiliaries were rapidly equipped and manned, together with the conspicuous ability with which a great naval force, largely extemporized, was handled and supplied, is extremely significant. The inherited aptitude of the American people for maritime operations has been strikingly asserted.

Of the military measures it is not possible to speak in the same terms. The task of the Washington authorities

was difficult and quite unfamiliar ; but organizing power in abundance is possessed by the American people, and money was poured out like water. There was, however, previous evidence that the War Department was badly constituted, largely monopolized by civilians, and ruled on political principles. The causes of its failure to rise to the emergency are not yet fully known and it will be interesting to see whether the American people demand an investigation. The fact remains that the expedition to Santiago was ill-equipped, ill-provided with transport and artillery, and lamentably deficient in essential requirements. The parallel of our own expedition to the Crimea irresistibly suggested itself. Before Santiago, as before Sebastopol, unnecessary sufferings and hardships were inflicted upon the troops, and in both cases disaster was averted by the gallantry of the regimental officers and of the rank and file.

It is perhaps too soon to attempt to deduce the lessons of the war. Those lessons are not and could not be what was generally expected. From each new experience some surprise is looked for ; yet, except in matters of pure detail, the invariable result of successive modern wars is to reaffirm the old lessons of the past. The modern ship and the modern armaments have revolutionized nothing. Now, as in the days of Queen Elizabeth, the gun is the decisive weapon in naval war and superior gunnery confers now, as then, unquestionable advantages. Accuracy and speed of fire are the main factors. The limitations of the modern warship are, on the whole, greater than those of her sailing prototype, as the proceedings of Admiral Cervera's hapless squadron show. Efficiency of propulsion is now, as ever, important ; but it now depends upon engine-room complements. Naval bombardments of coast defences are probably less effective than in Nelson's days. That they have been recently attempted on a considerable scale is probably due rather to the desirability of

giving the American seamen gunners practice, than to any special predilection on the part of American naval officers. On the other hand, it is clear that the command of the sea is now more than ever important, because it can be far more quickly turned to account. If, after Admiral Dewey's action in Manila Bay, sailing transports only had been available to convey troops to the Philippines, many months would have passed before military force could have been brought to bear. Naval victories can now, therefore, be followed up with a promptitude formerly impossible, provided that military preparations are organized in advance. The ancient lesson of the fatal results of unreadiness for war has been demonstrated afresh by the collapse of Spain, and the close connection between the political and moral conditions of a nation and its naval and military efficiency has been strikingly reaffirmed. The technical deficiencies of the Spanish navy have not been more marked than the incapacity of the Government for the conduct of naval war. The numerous writers who reckon the fighting capacity of navies by counting up the number of ships, and who estimate the powers of ships by their legend qualifications may perhaps be led to see that other considerations of much importance are involved in sea-power.

Turning to details, there are some points in Admiral Sampson's report published last week which are worth noticing. The *New York*, we learn, "received the undivided fire from the forts in passing the harbour entrance." These forts were said to have been destroyed on several previous occasions. The *Cristobal Colon*, with her nominal 19½ knot speed at natural draught, secured a six-mile start of her pursuers; but in spite of her watertube boilers "her spurt" was quickly "finished." "It was evident from the bridge that all the American ships"—*Brooklyn*, *Oregon*, *Texas*, *Vixen*, and *New York*—"were gradually overhauling the chase." The fact that the *Oregon* ulti-

mately showed better speed than the other American battleships was doubtless due to her long voyage from the Pacific, which had provided a thorough training for her engine-room staff. Sea training thus proved its intrinsic value. To save the *Colon* from sinking in deep water she was pushed on shore by the *New York*, this somewhat delicate operation being performed with "admirable judgment" by Captain Chadwick, the well-known late Naval Attaché of the United States Embassy in London. The *Maria Teresa* and *Oquendo* seem to have been set on fire in fifteen minutes, and the experience of the action of the Yalu was thus fully confirmed. It is clear that easily combustible materials must be removed from warships. The American ships used common shell almost exclusively, and the destruction on board the Spanish vessels was mainly due to the medium and smaller projectiles. Whether by reason of their relatively slower rate of fire, or from some other cause, the heavy guns of the battleships disappointed expectation. This is a repetition of the experience of the battle of the Yalu. The Spanish gunnery afloat, as on shore, was most indifferent, and, as Admiral Sampson intimates, his ships obtained the mastery from the beginning of the action. This rather than their armour protection conferred upon them relative immunity, and Admiral Farragut's opinion that effective fire is the best form of defence received fresh confirmation. Modern armaments enable an overpowering fire to be delivered, and by superior skill and coolness it is possible in a few minutes so to demoralize an opponent that the advantage once gained may prove decisive. This also is a venerable lesson; but in this country and elsewhere the spurious prestige attaching to the torpedo has perhaps tended to induce neglect of naval gunnery.

If the brief war now ended has produced no startling developments, its results will be necessarily far-reaching. The greatly overrated power of Spain was shattered by



the English Navy at the end of the sixteenth century and the way to English expansion was opened out. Three hundred years later the last remnants of the Spanish Empire have been obliterated by the great offshoot of the Anglo-Saxon race established in the New World. The oversea expansion of the United States has now begun, and the significance of the new departure in American politics is as yet only dimly perceived. On the other hand it is widely recognized that the attitude of the mother country at a critical period has been supremely advantageous to the American cause, and, although political memories are proverbially short, this important fact cannot be altogether forgotten.

## XIV

# THE LIMITATIONS OF NAVAL FORCE

(*"Nineteenth Century," August, 1899.*)

The strength of the Navy had been allowed to decline to a dangerous extent when Lord Salisbury's Government, after a prolonged campaign in the Press in which I took part, decided by the Naval Defence Act of 1889 to restore the situation. The result was a sudden revival of war shipbuilding, unprecedented in peace time. This and Captain (afterwards Rear-Admiral) A. T. Mahan's admirable books, which quickly followed, gave a general impetus to naval competition leading to developments which, in some cases, seemed ill-conceived. In this article, I attempted briefly to trace the evolution of sea power and to show that it had become subject to certain limitations. How far this analysis was justified or discredited by the experience of the Great War, the reader will judge. Some of the anticipations of the general advantages to be derived from naval strength, which were cherished between 1889 and 1899, could only lead to disappointment and wasteful expenditure, as has happened.

THE strength of the navy of England has at all times been the gauge of her territorial security and of her position among nations. Every great war at once made heavy demands upon the navy, and success turned upon the measure of sea power which Great Britain was able to exert. Nevertheless, the plain lesson that the maintenance of a sufficient fleet in time of peace was a primary duty of Parliament and the only effective guarantee against national disaster, came to be forgotten. The great navy which won and held the dominion of the seas during the long struggle ending in 1815 was permitted to dwindle to a peace strength which left no adequate margin. The concentration of public interest upon the military oper-

ations in the Crimea, and the failure of the Baltic fleet to accomplish tasks which do not belong to navies, served effectually to promote illusion.

In the general naval reconstruction which followed the Russian War no attempt was made to fix a reasonable standard of strength adjusted to national requirements. While British interests upon and across the seas were increasing yearly by leaps and bounds, the territorial defence of these islands by fortifications and auxiliary forces came to be regarded as a primary object. Lavish expenditure upon passive defence naturally produced neglect alike of the navy and the field army. Even the war scare of 1878 produced as its principal result a fresh instalment of passive defence, and the grave warning sounded by the late Lord Carnarvon's Commission was forgotten in the discussion of new projects of fortification. Thus during many years the Empire practically existed on sufferance, courting enormous losses and perhaps irretrievable disaster. The strenuous efforts of a few writers, whose appeals to history and to common sense were afterwards powerfully reinforced by Captain Mahan's admirable books, effected a veritable revolution. It was quickly discovered that naval expenditure was popular, and successive Governments vied in increasing the fleet. A rough standard of naval strength was authoritatively laid down, and shipbuilding programmes were pressed forward with unwonted energy. Since Colbert, in 1662, set about the reconstruction of the wasted navy of France, there has never been, in time of peace, a naval revival so thoroughly undertaken or so technically successful as that which Great Britain has accomplished in the last ten years. As remarkable has been the uprising of a strong Imperial sentiment, of which the regenerated fleet is alike an exciting cause and a fitting symbol.

This sudden national awakening, however, has had results which were not wholly anticipated. The European

Chancelleries began to recall with uneasiness the days in which Great Britain, with a population of eighteen millions and with colonies able to bring little except "opportunity of ports" to aid the national cause, faced the Continent in arms. We are never weary of laying stress upon our peculiarly unaggressive national character while steadily adding to our territorial possessions; but foreigners who study history may well be incredulous. It was inevitable that our great naval revival should appear in the guise of a portent, and that we should thus have supplied a powerful incentive to naval competition. If Great Britain had preserved any continuity of naval policy, that competition would perhaps never have attained its present dimensions. The suddenness of our resolve endowed it with special significance.

Six Powers are now busily engaged in adding to their fleets, and while one of them—Italy—already feels the strain severely, there seems no present prospect of any relaxation of effort. The question arises whether these numerous fleets can fully justify the expectations which—it must be assumed—have been formed of their potentiality. In other words, has naval force no limitations?

In early days, when nations were unorganized, the peoples who learned to use the sea had the coast lines of the Old World practically at their mercy. The Greeks could stud the shores of the Mediterranean with their colonies, occupying every spot which promised commercial advantages or means of comfortable existence. The detached communities thus formed became little centres of sea power, secure so long as their fleets were not overmatched. The Romans, with more deliberate purpose and less of the trading instinct, used the naval supremacy won in the wars with Carthage to plant military colonies along the seaboard, and thence to extend inland their territorial possessions. The Norsemen, at first

simple raiders of the coasts of England only, finding no organized resistance, widely extended their sphere of operations and formed fortified inland settlements on the Rhine, the Seine, the Rhone, and the Loire. The stress thus thrown upon Western Europe gave a strong impetus to military art and helped to develop the feudal system on the Continent. Sea power, as wielded by the Norsemen, was crude and unorganized; but it was based on the natural aptitudes of a fighting race, and its great influence on history has not been adequately recognized. By England under Alfred the Great it was successfully opposed at sea; by the Frankish and Teutonic peoples it was at length stemmed, mainly by cavalry.

As the European States acquired consolidation and their military forces assumed an organized form, their seaboards—more than ever important—began to experience comparative immunity from aggression. It was no longer possible for a people who happened to be superior at sea to plant and maintain settlements on any neighbouring coast-line. Reciprocal raids on the shores of the Channel continued, but changed character. While the proceedings of John de Vienne in the reign of Richard the Second resembled those of the Norsemen, attacks on the coast-line of organized States tended more and more to take the form of considerable expeditions, such as those directed against St. Malo and Cherbourg in 1758. During the wars of the French Revolution and Empire, although the extent and influence of the sea power of Great Britain attained dimensions previously unapproached, purely coastal attacks on the mainland territory of her enemies practically ceased, and expeditions for the capture of places deemed important took their place. In recent years, the great instance is that of 1854-55, when four Powers combined in an attack on Sebastopol which monopolized the efforts and decided the issue of a great war. Here, however, the comparative isolation of

the Crimea and the immense difficulties of the Russian line of communication were factors of the first importance.

The direct operations of sea power being thus gradually restricted in certain aspects by the growth of organized European States, the maritime Powers began to move further afield. Following precisely the proceedings of the ancient Greeks—and as easily—Spain, Portugal, and Holland established trading settlements on the shores of America, Africa, and Asia. Spain, with ambitions equaling those of Rome, but with infinitely less strength of purpose, sought to extend her settlements into an empire of the New World. While isolated and drawing little support from their hinterlands, such settlements evidently lay at the mercy of sea power, and Great Britain, at first contented with raiding them in the Norse fashion, proceeded later to conquest and occupation. Such conquest was in some cases child's play, like the capture of San Luis d'Apra by the United States last year. In other cases, and notably in the struggle between France and England for the dominion of India, immense efforts and long wars were entailed. The measure of resistance was that of the available local resources, and sea power, while essential to success and in this sense always decisive, no longer sufficed. It is an obvious truth that without naval supremacy the expansion of England would have been impossible, and both Canada and India would have passed into other hands. It is equally true that naval strength alone would not have saved either. A nation unable to produce troops of the best quality, great military leaders and capable administrators, must inevitably have lost both.

Viewing history in its broadest aspects, there appear to be grounds for the belief that the influence of sea power has undergone modifications, which ought not to be disregarded. The days when the Norsemen could row up the Seine and establish themselves strongly above Rouen cannot offer exact parallels with our own. Highly

specialized naval forces cannot act precisely in the same manner as mere fighting men navigating light craft propelled mainly by oars. When the sailing art had attained perfection, fleets enjoyed a freedom of movement now limited by their absolute dependence upon coal. There is here a great gain in speed and certainty of navigation ; but there is also a certain loss. Coast defence has changed its whole character since the times when the raider could draw up his ships on any convenient beach and proceed to plunder, certain of being opposed only by the few armed inhabitants who could be hastily collected from neighbouring villages. Now, important harbours can be easily and quite inexpensively protected against purely naval attack. As early as 1794 it was shown that two 18-pounder guns mounted on a tower could repulse two British ships of the line with heavy loss, and when the miserable work known as the Telegraph Battery succeeded at Sebastopol in putting several line-of-battle ships out of action, it must have become evident that the attack of coast defences was not the business of navies. Further scientific advance has added to the inequality of conditions between the ship and the coast battery, and the attack of defended harbours is now more than ever a purely military operation, in which a fleet acts as a covering force.

Seaborne trade has increased enormously in importance and volume, gaining steadily in speed and safety of transit ; but land communications have received an incomparably greater development. The distribution of trade is now largely a matter of railways, which are exerting a powerful influence upon the commercial systems of the world, and changing what may be called their strategic centres. Directly and indirectly, railways threaten the sphere of influence of sea power. The attack on the coastwise trade of an enemy—once a formidable weapon in the hands of a naval Power—has lost some of its efficacy. Such an attack may entail only inconvenience now that

land communications, formerly non-existent, can temporarily replace sea-transit for distributing purposes. And in the wider sense the vast railway systems of Europe unquestionably tend to reduce the pressure which sea power was able to exert at the beginning of the century. The elasticity of arrangements which is one of the most striking characteristics of modern commerce will invest neutral harbours with new importance during a great war. The difficulties of the commercial blockade of a long coast-line are perhaps greater than ever, and at the same time the neutral port, thanks to railway communication, can do for a belligerent what was formerly impossible.

Sea power cannot seal a land frontier, and in proportion to the ease and cheapness of land communications will the trade of a belligerent be assisted. So great is the complexity of interests of modern commerce that, in a war with a European Power, British capital, attracted by high prices, would almost certainly be employed in supplying the needs of the enemy.

These reflections and many others point to certain general principles which have not been sufficiently recognized. The functions of navies are practically limited in war to the attack and defence of sea communications, implying a vigorous and sustained offensive against an enemy's armed ships. The Power which is able to hold those communications can not only count on territorial security for such of its possessions as are liable to oversea attack alone, but is free to employ military force against an enemy's territory. The limits of such offensive action are determined by the strength of the field forces available and by the measure of resistance which can be concentrated at the point selected for attack. Here evidently local considerations and questions of land communication enter. Isolated settlements which have no independent resources must fall an easy prey to the Power which commands the sea. Highly organized



States, such as are Canada and India, such as Federated Australia will become, such as we may hope South Africa will one day be, can offer a measure of resistance to oversea attack which would demand of the invader great efforts and a huge provision of transports. In 1854 a railway—even a first-class road—connecting Sebastopol with the military centres of Russia would either have caused the project of invading the Crimea to be abandoned or would have brought disaster upon the invaders. If land communications in Cuba had not been almost non-existent, General Shafter's force must either have been trebled or would have been driven into the sea. A railway between Havana and Santiago would have altered the aspects of the campaign, even though the ultimate result would not have been doubtful. Sea power thus secured evident advantage because the land communications and the natural resources of Cuba had been hopelessly neglected.

Great Britain, dependent upon seaborne trade for the food supply and for the purchasing power of a crowded population, and ruling a vast Empire held together by maritime communications alone, must be prepared to assert supremacy at sea or perish. Supremacy at sea demands that the navy should take the offensive at the outbreak of war, and should concentrate its energies upon an enemy's warships. The greater task includes the less and, if the ocean communications of the Empire are held, oversea invasion of its territory at home and abroad is impossible. For the exercise of sea power in this sense, the conditions have never been so supremely favourable as now and, while the immense growth of British seaborne trade may seem to involve an increase of vulnerability, that trade—steam propelled—can be more easily protected than in sailing days. The story of the depredations of the *Alabama* and her consorts has been widely misread.

While sea power has gained in what may be termed its defensive aspects, the offensive character imparted to it by Great Britain in the old wars has undergone limitations. The military operations which since navies became specialized bodies have always been the corollary of naval supremacy can be more than ever effectively covered; but they have become more serious in scope, and in some cases they are no longer possible. During the senseless war of 1812-14 with the United States, a British expeditionary force occupied Washington. No measure of naval supremacy would now render such an operation possible. A second Crimean campaign is practically out of the question. Ten years ago Vladivostok might have been taken at the cost of great efforts. Within a short period Port Arthur may be made absolutely unassailable by any force which Great Britain could employ. In the Far East, railways must compete directly with sea power, and rivalry between Great Britain and Russia will then assume a purely military character. The idea that the conversion of Wei-Hai-Wei into a "secondary" or any other species of naval base will enable a fleet to check Russian projects is illusory. Unless Russia could be overpowered on land there would be no trade in the Gulf of Pe-chi-li for our navy to protect. Again, during the old wars the most important of the undeveloped colonies of other Powers fell into the hands of Great Britain. Surveying the map of the world to-day, we find no possessions of foreign nations that we have any real reason to desire. We have not now, as at the beginning of the contest with France, an empire to gain. It is our present task to hold and to develop. By proceeding to further overseas conquests we should neither secure advantage to ourselves nor inflict material injury upon an enemy. Finally, attack on commerce is—for Great Britain—a less formidable weapon than it was a century ago. We cannot now expect to impose arbitrary restrictions upon neutrals.

There is little commerce afloat that we could attack without injuring British interests.

The conclusion seems inevitable that our sea power, relatively and absolutely more potent for the defence of the Empire, is distinctly less capable of exerting decisive pressure upon an enemy, and therefore of bringing a great war to a conclusion. By maritime conquests our Empire was won, and trade thus directly followed the flag. As Mr. Ellis Ashley has pointed out, it is now more correct to say that "trade *is* the flag." In peace time, it is clear that navies cannot directly promote trade, although the growth of trade provides, as in Germany,<sup>1</sup> a strong plea for the increase of a navy. It is even possible that the construction of great fleets, by its demands on the industries of a country, may check profitable production. The promotion of national commerce is, as the Continental Powers have begun to discover, a question for Foreign Offices rather than for Ministers of Marine.

The conditions of the European Powers differ so widely from our own that there can be no true analogy of naval requirements. The one purely Continental war of this century in which sea power proved decisive was that waged by the German Confederation against Denmark in 1848-9. The Danish navy, in full command of the sea and operating from an insular base, was able to give such substantial aid to the military operations that the siege of Fredericia ended disastrously and the Germans withdrew from Schleswig. The part played by the Russian navy in 1828-9 had an extremely important influence on the campaigns both in Europe and in Asia; but in the then exhausted condition of Turkey the issue was predetermined; and in 1878, when the naval situation was reversed, the Russian army camped before Constantinople. The difficulties and the losses of the campaign, followed by the

<sup>1</sup> See my "Germany as a Naval Power," *Nineteenth Century*, May, 1899.

threat of British intervention, supplied Russia with a powerful incentive for the creation of a strong fleet in the Black Sea. In the war of 1866, the foolish attack on Lissa and the naval action which followed conformed strictly to ancient law, but the issue had already been determined on land and the incident had no practical importance. In 1859, and in 1870-1, navies played no part. A Franco-German war, a Russo-German war, or a contest between the Triple and Dual Alliances must mainly be decided by military success or failure. German trade in the Baltic and North Sea would suffer interruption in a war with France; but at a time when the whole effective manhood of both nations was drawn to the colours their industries must in any case suffer temporary restrictions.

In 1870-1, Germany could give her trade no protection, and by blocking her ports with mines in fear of the attack of a French fleet which could not approach them, she incurred unnecessary losses. Nevertheless, from 1871 onwards German commerce has prospered exceedingly. The geographical position of Germany is such that no reasonable increase to the navy would enable her to despatch expeditionary forces to attack the colonies of France. On the other hand, France has no inducement to attempt the conquest of German colonies, even if troops could be spared for the task. Concentration of effort upon the land campaigns by which the issue must be decided would be the necessary policy of both Powers. In a war with Russia, the fleet of Germany would neutralize that of her opponent in the Baltic. German communications with the Far East would be rendered precarious and Kiao-chau would have to take care of itself; but here, again, the inducement to either Power to expend energy upon subsidiary operations could not be great, since the ultimate decision must lie with the land campaign in Europe, whatever occurred elsewhere. It is difficult to conceive the

Austrian navy as a really important factor in any great war. The fleet of Italy may, as has often been pointed out, be intended as a coast defence force to prevent France from supplementing an advance across the frontier by an oversea attack. It is not, however, well constituted for such a task ; it is a heavy drain upon a poor country and, except in alliance with that of a great naval Power, it cannot look for any considerable achievement. Japan, with a growing trade, is building up a great navy, which, from the geographical position of its bases, must exercise a dominating influence in Far Eastern waters. Japan in alliance with a great naval Power will be able to secure the command of the Northern China Seas, and her formidable army would then be available for operations on land. In a Russo-Japanese war, sea and land communications would compete for victory, and the haste with which Russia is seeking to consolidate her position in Manchuria is easily explained.

At opposite ends of the world, therefore, two island nations, one purely from motives of self-protection and the other with dawning ambitions, are unwillingly supplying arguments for the expansion of navies. If Russia had been disposed to accept Mr. Goschen's offer and call a halt, the growing power of Japan—a far more uncertain factor than Great Britain—might have inspired other counsels. We have not perhaps sufficiently realized the power of Japan, with her great and highly organized army within short striking distance of the latest territorial acquisition of Russia.

If we could regard eagerness to secure material prosperity by means of trade as the only cause likely to disturb the peace of nations, there would be hopes of a better mutual understanding. France has nothing to gain by adding to her ill-digested possessions. The rapid progress of the trade of Germany should satisfy her aspirations, and that progress owes practically nothing to so-called colonies.

A good commercial treaty with Great Britain, such as M. de Witte probably desires, coupled with steady development of her immense territory, would do more for the prosperity of Russia than any further ventures in China. The trade prospects of the United States are magnificent, and they have Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines on their hands awaiting just administration and internal development. We cannot, however, regard trade rivalry as the only probable cause of war so long as such incidents as that of Fashoda can occur; and even if China were peaceably partitioned, nations may fight on real or supposed points of honour. National pride does not easily admit a mistake, however flagrant, and in the mistakes of individuals the honour of a nation may unfortunately become involved. The new Court of Arbitration should in time be regarded as a means of appeasing honour without resort to war; but meanwhile we must be prepared to meet all reasonable probabilities. Our standard of naval preparations must continue to be based on those of other Powers to whom naval supremacy is not an imperious necessity. Human nature being what it is, we cannot perhaps expect these Powers to recognize the facts that the competition is for us inevitable, that we desire nothing at their expense, and that a strong British navy is one of the most effective guarantees of the peace of the world.

On our side there must be no illusions. The navy is, from the Imperial point of view, a defensive force, more powerful than ever in that rôle, less powerful in some aspects than formerly as the final arbiter of war. To strike is the function of the field army. It is trade which enables us to maintain our present navy, and, if that trade does not keep pace with our growing population, naval supremacy cannot be assured. If, therefore, foreign Powers can pass us in the race for commerce, they will compass the downfall of the Empire without any need for

an inordinate increase of their fleets. Increase of territory does not, as is sometimes assumed, necessarily carry with it increase of trade. If this were so, French commerce would show an extraordinary advance. The basis of trade lies in the reciprocal needs of large populations of producers.

Lastly, the industries by which markets are supplied and the communications, land or sea, by which these markets are reached have, since 1815, come to depend more and more upon coal. The twentieth century will see a marked increase in the price of the coal of the United Kingdom. India, Australia, and South Africa will come to the aid of the Empire; but the United States may become the centre of the world's coal supply, to be, in the far future, perhaps supplanted by China. How these changes will affect the relative sea power of nations it would be rash to attempt to predict.

## XV

# ORGANIZATION OF THE ARMY

(“*The Times*,” 7 December, 1900.)

This article is one of many in which I tried to draw public attention to the outstanding defects in our Army Organization. It was inspired mainly by the grave defects which the War in South Africa laid bare. My main objects, then and always, were (1) to provide a field force kept in readiness for immediate embarkation, and (2) to reorganize the old Militia force as a “real second line to the Army.” In 1905-6 I was at length able to play a part in Army Reorganization, and an expeditionary force, which I had advocated long before, came into existence, mercifully before August, 1914; but Mr. Haldane against my advice decided upon the *de facto* destruction of the Militia, our oldest armed Force.

THE organization of the Army has been frequently, and for the most part vainly, criticized during the past twenty-five years. Its state has been the subject of many inquiries, and volumes of evidence have been taken, of which condemnation, direct or implied, has been the ruling characteristic. From the late Commander-in-Chief and from minor spokesmen of the military hierarchy, there has been a combined stream of testimony tending to show that great evils existed, and foreshadowing much that is now painfully apparent.

When urgent necessity arose for reinforcing the troops in South Africa, instant demands had to be made upon the garrisons of India and of the colonial stations—demands which in less favourable circumstances could not have been fulfilled. The force thus collected was inadequate and was an aggregate of units in no sense organized for



war. If our military preparations had corresponded with our national requirements, the course of the war would have been different. The mobilization of the first army corps, a cavalry division, and some additional infantry battalions was at length tardily begun, and, as ample time was available for maturing every arrangement, the work was easily accomplished. It became quickly evident, as had been foreseen by every serious critic, that the army corps was not what was wanted. As such it never existed for a day ; but its constitution on paper dictated an order of embarkation of units which did not conform to the needs of the military situation. An immense Staff was suddenly created, of which the members were strange to each other and to the troops, and were, in some cases, quite unfamiliar with their duties. Arrived in South Africa, the army corps and the cavalry division, as such, disappeared and no trace of their paper organization remains. If, however, the theories of the War Office organizers had been realized, and if a British army corps had been placed in line with and opposed by the solid organizations produced by the territorial systems of the Continent, how painful would have been its disabilities ! The process of mobilization slowly proceeded, and an eighth division began to assume concrete form on 22nd January, 1900. Thus the mobilization of an army corps, a cavalry division, four additional infantry divisions, a cavalry brigade, and some details was spread over more than three months, and it is impossible to regard this achievement as a triumph of our Army system.

Disasters and bitter humiliation having brought home to the country and to the military authorities the magnitude of the task lightly undertaken, improvisation on a large scale was inaugurated. The wholesale volunteering of Militia battalions for active service helped to relieve the pressure for men, but these battalions, neglected in peace time and despoiled by the Army, were short of men and

of officers, and were but indifferently trained. No other whole units with a semblance of an organization existed in this country, in spite of the large number of men nominally available. A so-called Imperial Yeomanry was hastily brought together by calling for Volunteers of all kinds and trusting largely to the efforts of individuals, thus reverting to the practice of days when permanent military organizations were rudimentary or non-existent. Through the agency of the Lord Mayor of London a body of "City Imperial Volunteers" was brought into existence by skimming many regiments. Other Volunteers, irregularly obtained, were collected in companies to join their territorial battalions. The innate military spirit of the British people facilitated these promiscuous measures. The numerical weakness of the Boers and the great disabilities inherent in their loose organization came powerfully to our assistance. "The majority of us," said the officer commanding the City Imperial Volunteers, "had no less than two months on the line of communications to learn those special duties which pertain to service at the front." Time was thus in our favour to repair, at great cost, the grave defects in our military system. On 10th January, Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener began—in South Africa and in face of the enemy—to organize a field army.

A military force depends for its fighting efficiency upon the solidarity of its units—regiments of cavalry, batteries of artillery, and battalions of infantry. The mobilized strengths of these units are about 670, 175, and 1,100 men respectively. So many young soldiers present with the colours were unfit for service abroad that in some cases considerably more than half the requisite quota of these units was made up from the so-called Reserve, and not half the nominal effectives of the Home Army could be placed in the field. By a wholesale use of that Reserve and of the miscalled Militia Reserve the deficiency was

made up, these two Reserves being thus practically expended in replacing immature lads maintained at great expense in the ranks, but unable when required to render soldier service. The South African war inevitably created a heavy demand for mounted infantry, and under our system a number of men belonging to infantry battalions had been trained for this purpose. As on previous occasions, but now on a far larger scale, these men were withdrawn from their units and grouped into new organizations. In some cases, therefore, battalions lost the pick of their officers and men before entering upon the campaign, and there was a further drain upon them for signallers and various staff duties. A battalion might thus come to be composed of (*a*) young soldiers little over 20; (*b*) so-called Reservists fresh from their homes and undrilled for two or three years; (*c*) Militia Reservists partially trained; and (*d*) a company of Volunteers representing several corps. Its wastage might be made good by drafts of young soldiers who, in some cases, had never been through a course of musketry, and who were considered to be just physically fit to be sent to the front; while even this provision could not be made without stopping the flow of drafts urgently required for India.

Such conditions imply the absolute negation of every principle upon which a sound military organization should be based. If they are adequately realized, it becomes easy to understand the difficulties under which our Army in the field has laboured, and an explanation of some unfortunate incidents is supplied. That the fighting power of our troops has been so brilliantly displayed is a striking tribute to the high qualities of our officers and men thus heavily handicapped by a vicious system. The wholesale splitting up of higher units, the frequent changes of commanders and staff officers, the new groupings constantly arising, the great variety of the local and other colonial contingents, the losses, and the influx of inferior

material have combined to confer almost an irregular character upon our forces in South Africa. They now consist, for the most part, of men hardened and trained by experience in the rough school of war, but they bear no resemblance to the paper organizations prescribed for the British Army. It may fairly be doubted whether any other troops than our own would have stood the trials which an exceedingly difficult campaign and a hopelessly defective system have entailed without showing symptoms of disintegration.

The lessons of the war in regard to the principles of our military organization are unmistakable. There is no need for any revolution, but drastic changes are essential. "We are fond of shams in this country," as Lord Wolseley has well said; it is necessary that these shams should be summarily ended. Delusive figures must no longer be paraded for the deception of the public; the only true test of a military system is the number of trained, equipped, and organized men, prepared at all points for war, which it can produce. Dealing with our miscellaneous forces in turn, the following is an outline of the principal reforms now required :

A.—*The Regular Army*.—The army corps organization, which has never existed except on paper, but has nevertheless worked sufficient evil, should be abandoned. The infantry and field artillery at home should be organized in divisions, the cavalry and horse artillery in brigades. The periods of enlistment can remain as at present, but should begin to reckon only from the age of 20, or from the date at which the soldier is certified to be fit for active service abroad. The rates of pay should be adjusted so as to attract grown men and to be progressive. Cubicles in barracks and other improvements in the conditions of life of the soldier, together with a diminution of useless and repulsive routine duties, would do much to heighten the

attractions of the service. Men under 20, or physically unable to render soldier service, to be paid at present rates. Re-engagement at increased pay to carry pensions, or Government employment prior to pension, to be open to at least 25 per cent. of the rank and file, as proposed by Lord Airey's Committee. Re-engagement for shorter periods to be permitted, and soldiers quitting the colours to be allowed six months before finally deciding whether or not they will extend their service. Re-engaged men serving at home to be allowed to live out of barracks, receiving a messing allowance. A real Army Reserve to be formed by giving a retaining fee to men under 40 who have completed their term of engagement. The result of the above proposals will be to increase considerably the pay of effective soldiers, but to diminish the present enormous expenditure upon rickety boys of whom a large proportion never give a day's soldier service to the State. The establishment of the Army in all arms to be revised with a view to fulfil the following conditions :

(1) To provide a field force at home consisting of not less than three divisions and two cavalry brigades always ready for immediate embarkation, and at least ten divisions and three cavalry brigades capable of being mobilized within a week by recalling men from furlough. The composition of a British division will require revision, which must include an increase of field artillery and possibly the addition of properly organized battalions of mounted infantry or cyclists. Similarly the cavalry brigade should be provided with horse artillery.

(2) To maintain in full efficiency the forces in India and in the garrisons abroad.

(3) To provide sedentary troops, garrison artillery and engineers, for the fortified harbours at home, a portion of the armaments only to be manned in peace, the rest to be taken over in the event of a great war by local Militia trained to their service.

Reforms carried out on these lines would result in a reduction of present nominal strength and a considerable increase of effective soldiers. It may be objected that it is advisable to keep boys who in course of time will become soldiers, and who meanwhile are learning discipline. If the country is willing to pay for cadets, the present practice can be continued, provided that such cadets are not included in the roll of effective soldiers.

B.—*The Militia* to be reorganized as a real second line to the Army. Transfers to the colours to be permitted but not encouraged, and efficiency of units to be the sole criterion of the merits of commanding officers. The pay to be raised in order to enable the necessary establishment of grown men to be maintained. Officers retiring from the Army to be liable to service in the Militia up to the age of 50. The practice of counting subalterns, who join in order to qualify for commissions in the Army, as part of the Militia strength, to cease. The so-called Militia Reserve to be abolished and a real reserve formed by giving a retaining fee to men under 40 who have completed their Militia engagement. The Militia establishment to be thoroughly revised, the object being—

(1) To provide a field army of not less than twelve completely equipped divisions for home defence, or to reinforce the army in the field in a great war.

(2) To provide the garrison artillery companies required to complete the manning of coast defence armaments.

(3) To provide infantry battalions for the garrisons of fortified ports, such battalions to be distinct from the Militia field army and to be localized as close as possible to their allotted stations.

This will involve an increase to the present establishment of Militia, which, in recent years, has never been approximately attained, the creation of a Militia field artillery, and a great improvement in the training which can easily be attained by proper administrative arrangements.

C.—*The Yeomanry* to be converted into and trained only as mounted infantry, which Lord Wolseley has already advocated. The establishment to be revised on the basis of providing an adequate mounted force for the requirements of the home field army. The pay to be sufficient to enable the establishment to be maintained, and retired Regular officers to be liable for service in the Yeomanry up to the age of 50.

D.—*The Volunteers* to be frankly recognized as a paid force for home defence only, and to be reduced to an establishment, say, not exceeding 120,000. A good physical standard to be insisted upon, and adequate inducements for ensuring proficiency with the rifle to be provided. The Volunteers to supply only infantry, position artillery, field engineers, provided with transport by a system of registration, and properly constituted cyclist corps, and to be organized in brigades specially composed. Their rôle to be that of a field force equipped with heavy mobile artillery and capable of rapidly taking up field positions previously studied to arrest the advance of an invader who had not been opposed at the coast line. Cadet corps or rifle clubs may be encouraged as feeders to the Volunteer organization, but should not receive money grants or be counted as effectives.

The above proposals indicate the general lines which the organization of our military forces must follow if it is to be brought into harmony with principles instead of being based as now upon accidental influences, the theories of individuals, or pure caprice. The adoption of these proposals would secure to the nation : (a) a considerable field force always ready for war without drawing a man from civil life ; (b) a large field force on mobilization with a reserve behind it ; (c) a great territorial field army (Militia) also provided with a reserve, and fully capable of alleviating the fears of “ the old women of both sexes ” at home if

the whole of the Regular field forces were serving abroad, and ready, as soon as those fears had subsided, to reinforce the army oversea ; (d) a second line field force (Volunteers) for home defence alone ; and (e) a large number of men capable of being drawn into the above categories in the event of emergency. The main object has been to prepare for offensive war and at the same time to make concessions to the apparently considerable class which is incapable of realizing what naval defence implies. It has also been sought to allot definite duties to our manifold forces, and to provide clear aims as a basis for training.

The protracted operations in South Africa have necessarily disorganized our whole military system. Because we have successfully opposed one of the most loosely-knit military bodies in the world, it already appears to be considered in some quarters that the era of the amateur soldier has arrived. The lessons of the war, properly understood, are of a diametrically opposite nature, and this dangerous delusion requires to be sternly combated. We have learned by bitter humiliations that our forces are not organized and trained for war. We have also seen that we possess fighting material unsurpassed in quality, and that adequate brain power properly applied is alone required to produce a perfectly efficient Army. It is necessary to remedy obvious defects before we are threatened with national disaster.



## XVI

### TRAINING OF THE ARMY

(*"The Times," 28 February, 1901.*)

Lord Wolseley and other authorities in the nineties of last century had pointedly drawn attention to the lack of training of our Army for War. There seemed to be certain reasons, which I tried to explain, why our training was deficient, and the revelations which the South African War disclosed inspired the writing of this article.

TRAINING, using the term in the widest sense, is a vital part in the preparation of an army for war. It ranges from the handling of large bodies of troops down to the instruction of the private soldier. It covers the whole field of military science in every branch. It embraces alike the intellectual process necessitated by the study of strategy and of tactics, the physical development of the body, and that education of hand and eye by prolonged practice which is essential to effective rifle shooting. Its only assured foundation is the habit of intelligent obedience, which is expressed in the word discipline. Thus from the private soldier to the Commander-in-Chief of an army a finely graduated scale of knowledge and of personal capacity is demanded.

As long as armies fought in crowded masses over which control could be maintained by superior authority, formal movements mechanically executed sufficed for the requirements of the battlefield. The army of Frederick the Great was a perfect machine, responding with precision to the demands of the directing head. The drill of the parade ground and the manœuvres required in the field were

practically one and the same. The soldier and the subordinate officer were forced by an iron discipline to become masters of formal evolutions sedulously practised. Neither was called upon to think for himself, and a stolid, unintelligent obedience satisfied the military conditions of the time. The system had its weak side, the full disclosure of which the generally sluggish movements of the Austrian opponents of the King tended to prevent. After the death of Frederick, the system was maintained in spite of his plain intimation that it would need change. The commanders whom he instructed had grown old and had become wedded to tradition. The younger officers, without war experience, had failed to grasp the nature or significance of his warning. Thus one of the best-drilled armies the world has seen was shattered at Jena and Auerstadt before the new methods of Napoleon.

It was a peace-trained Prussian army which fought the campaign of 1866, when superior generalship, better organization, and breech-loading small arms combined to secure a striking success ; but tactical shortcomings on the side of the victors were manifest, and the handling both of cavalry and of artillery was plainly defective. The lessons of 1866 were taken to heart and rigorously applied to the North German armies, with the startling results seen in 1870-1.

The British Army during many years prior to the outbreak of the Boer War had been almost continuously engaged in warlike operations of a varied character in many parts of the world. No other army had so great an accumulated experience of campaigning ; but, for several reasons, the practical training thus acquired did not altogether conduce to sound preparation for war. Our opponents when possessing fighting qualities of a high class, like the Sudanese and the fanatics of the North-West Frontier, were for the most part ill-armed, and when well equipped, like the Egyptian army in 1882, were incapably

commanded. Military reputations and rapid promotion were thus in some cases easily won, and, as little discrimination was exercised in the distribution of rewards, capacity in troop leading was not made the necessary stepping-stone to high positions in the Army. Inducements to the earnest study of war were thus wanting, and mere presence in a minor campaign sufficed to secure the fulfilment of the objects of military ambition. The small war came to be regarded as an exciting form of sport carrying with it the probability of great rewards without entailing the need for any special intellectual effort. It followed inevitably that high rank could be attained without the possession of the necessary qualifications, that the Army did not possess an adequate number of competent instructors in the higher branches of military science, and that peace manœuvres were frequently farcical. It is true that the small war provided useful experience as regards transport questions ; but the improvisation which might succeed on a small scale was dangerous when applied to such a campaign as that in South Africa. The idea that any promiscuous group of officers who will work in tolerable harmony can form a staff is opposed to the whole teaching of modern war.

There can be no doubt that any European force confronted with the difficult task which has fallen to us in South Africa would have exhibited defects in training, but it must be admitted that many of the mistakes which have led to loss of life and to national chagrin can be directly traced to a faulty system and might have been avoided. Neglect of the all-important duty of reconnaissance led to several disasters, and the late Adjutant-General of the Army, when actually in the field, was impelled to express a hope " that our officers will at length learn the necessity for good scouting." Nevertheless, the unfortunate battle of Colenso was fought without any clear idea as to the position of the enemy and under a complete misapprehen-

sion as to the level of the Tugela. How far the too numerous surrenders were due to want of recognition of the defensive power of the modern rifle and to the false teaching imparted at manœuvres we cannot know. Troops accustomed to be ordered by ill-qualified umpires to lay down their arms because they were assumed to have been "annihilated" by a fire which would have inflicted trivial loss upon men well covered, might be expected to repeat their lessons in war. In the art of taking up a good defensive position and strengthening it, our forces in South Africa have, on some occasions, proved plainly deficient, and this may fairly be attributed to a faulty peace-training. To the handling of artillery in the field some generals were clearly quite unaccustomed, and the results were serious. The individual instruction was palpably inadequate, and skill in taking cover, which can be inculcated under a good system of training, had to be acquired at a heavy sacrifice. Staff duties were often indifferently performed, and for various reasons a trained staff can hardly be said to have existed. This also must be ascribed to our system, which does not, in peace time, test the capacity of staff officers. Men accustomed to spend most of their time in offices and able to build up a reputation by proficiency in dealing with papers cannot, even if equipped with an academic familiarity with the details of the Franco-German campaign acquired at Sandhurst, be expected to rise to the exacting requirements of war. Moreover, a large proportion of the miscellaneous staff officers employed in South Africa had no previous acquaintance with their duties and were dependent upon their unaided natural instincts. There were not only staff officers who did not know their work, but generals who did not know how to use their staffs. Education is an art not studied to much effect in this country, where our civil experiments in this direction have been only moderately successful. The education of an army is only a special branch of a great

subject for which we have not at present shown any marked national aptitude.

An army cannot train itself. In such matters as preparation for war it is absolutely in the hands of the central military authority, and it is impossible to ascribe failure in the education of the Army to the peculiarities of the British Constitution. If the civil Minister obtains from Parliament, which is always willing to grant anything required to ensure military efficiency, the money necessary for manœuvres, the entire responsibility for turning those manœuvres to the best account rests with the military hierarchy at the War Office. There is scarcely a defect manifested in South Africa which has not been previously pointed out in *The Times*, and this fact may be taken to prove that foresight has not been wanting, and that the Army contains thoughtful students of war whose warnings, frequently expressed, have failed to produce practical results.

The changes which are urgently needed to fit our military forces for the work which may at any time devolve upon them cannot be brought about by unaided regulations. The Army is already swathed in complex bonds of regulations of every description. Regulations already provide in theory against many of the ills from which we have suffered in South Africa. It is a moral and an intellectual regeneration which is now demanded. "The letter killeth ; but the spirit giveth life," and "Back from the Veldt" has lately shown what adherence to the letter may imply in the instruction of an army. The "Laputan methods" which waste the time and dull the intelligence of the soldier must be abandoned. If we have "stupid officers" and "infinitely stupider private soldiers," which in the literal sense has not been proved, they are the results of a system which tends to destroy the initiative and the individuality that all sound methods of education must seek to promote. In place of prescribing formulæ which, according to the

egregious orders not long ago published at the Curragh, "are to be known by heart by all ranks who have passed their drills," it is essential to cultivate individual intelligence by every possible means. The days when mechanical obedience to accustomed words of command sufficed for the needs of an army have ended for ever. In military as in commercial competition, the modern condition of success must mainly be sought in an adequate and a suitable educational equipment. The officers of the British Army are not more stupid than those of Germany, but they are vastly more ignorant, since the German system renders want of actual knowledge in the various ranks impossible. Similarly, pure want of acquirable knowledge handicaps our commercial enterprise.

The need of the Army is competent instructors of every degree, and, so long as the study of military science is not rewarded, such instructors will not be forthcoming. The present examination tests imposed upon officers are futile. Such questions as "How do you fell a tree with an axe?" or "Draw a sketch of a bowline knot," which have appeared in very recent years, can only show whether a candidate has learned his text-book by rote. A brief period of cramming and an average memory suffice to secure a pass, except when the caprice of some ill-chosen examiner leads him to propound questions which a Von Moltke would find it difficult to answer within the time limits.

The only true test is aptitude in handling troops, by which the results of study are practically demonstrated. The officer in each successive grade must be made to show that he is fully qualified to instruct the troops under his command. The necessary study will be automatically secured if it is once understood that military proficiency in all ranks is the sole road to military advancement. If no command were ever bestowed except upon officers who had proved their capacity for its duties, a new spirit would arise in the Army, "the spirit that giveth life."

Inspection, made into a reality and applied to proficiency in field duties and not to routine evolutions, would effectually stimulate military study in preparation for war.

Manœuvres on a large or on a small scale, carried on under service conditions and treated with enforced seriousness by all ranks, would enable incompetence to be detected. When the superior officer is visibly bored and only anxious for a field day to terminate, the junior officer and the private cannot be expected to take an intelligent interest in the proceedings. The late Commander-in-Chief has stated that, "To work our men during manœuvres as is often done abroad would necessitate a far greater pressure upon our young soldiers than those responsible for the recruiting of our Army can venture to impose, during peace, upon the rank and file." These are grave words. Taken literally they imply that the regular forces of the Empire cannot be properly trained for war. Fortunately this view need not be implicitly accepted. The necessity for filling the ranks with boys physically unfit for field manœuvres has not yet been proved, and there is no reason to believe that such manœuvres, intelligently executed, could not be much more attractive to the soldier than the drudgery which they ought to supplant. Nor need it be feared that arrangements cannot be made to render training grounds available for our forces. It is the long "nights out of bed" spent in dreary and useless sentry duties, rather than manœuvres, that "seriously affect the recruiting of a voluntary army." The soldier unquestionably resents the pecuniary loss entailed upon him by the wear and tear of clothing during manœuvres, and our present clothing regulations are so devised as to put a premium upon the evasion of military duties; but this is a matter for minor administrative reform easily accomplished when military considerations receive due weight at the War Office.

In the initial training of the soldier there is some necessary drudgery which can be mitigated under a better system.

At large depôts, such as those at Caterham and Walmer, selected instructors, proper teaching appliances, and a well-considered curriculum can be provided, by which the preliminary instruction of the recruit can alike be shortened and rendered less repellent than it now appears. As soon as the instruction at such large depôts is passed, the higher training of troops can be made interesting to all ranks. It is the idea of being uselessly marched about, as now frequently happens, that damps the military zeal of officers and men. Field days and progressive manœuvres, intelligently devised and conducted, can be made actually attractive.

Lastly, as *The Times* has frequently pointed out, there is vital need of a central department capable of studying in advance the requirements of "inevitable" and other wars, and relieved of all executive duties. The Intelligence Branch is only one section of an office which should be at once the central advising department in matters of military policy and a school of instruction in the higher duties of the General Staff.

The new spirit, the spirit which alone will regenerate the training of the Army, cannot be implanted by regulations. Draconian edicts imposing new obligations upon officers will not suffice. Existing regulations contain much that is excellent, but is uniformly ignored. The new spirit must be inspired by the military chiefs, who have now a unique opportunity. The cleansing fires of war have revealed some incompetence, but also much real merit. The Army has received a practical training which is possessed by no other military force in the world; the most exacting of all tests has been applied, and it can no longer be said that selection offers difficulties. Let the coming rewards be bestowed in every case solely and simply on grounds of proved military aptitude, and let appointments of every kind be made in future on these grounds alone. Thus, and thus only, can the training of



the Army be placed upon a sure basis. Ability has not hitherto received a fair field, although when assisted by accidental circumstances and, perhaps, by war correspondents, it has occasionally been able to assert itself. In a well-ordered army, as in other professions, ability can be discerned and encouraged. The British Army contains a due proportion of ability ; the stupid officer and the stupid private exist in all armies. The ignorant officer and the ill-trained soldier can only be the results of a vicious and an ill-conceived system.

## XVII

### THE STAFF AND THE ARMY

(“*The Times*,” 15 October, 1901.)

As Secretary of the Hartington Commission (1888-90), I had vainly hoped that the establishment of a General Staff would be strongly recommended; but Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman was hostile and this all-important reform was shelved. I pleaded often and earnestly in *The Times* for the reconstruction of our confused Staff system, and in the sixth “Letter of Vetus” (see p. 131) I proposed a complete reorganization of the War Office. In 1904, the Esher Committee laid down a Staff system in full detail, which with small modification proved successful in the Great War and has held the field till this year, when an innovation has been made which our most experienced officers regard as dangerous.

In examination before a Select Committee of the House of Commons in May, 1887, Major-General (now General Sir H.) Brackenbury described the Great General Staff of the German Army as “the keystone of the whole system of German military organization . . . the cause of the great efficiency of the German army . . . acting as the powerful brain of the military body, to the designs of which brain the whole body is made to work.” He added significantly: “I cannot but feel that to the want of any such great central thinking department is due that want of economy and efficiency which to a certain extent exists in our Army.”

These words were no mere figures of speech; they embody truths amply and strikingly demonstrated alike in war and in peace. The Great General Staff founded by Von Moltke has—in the phrase applied with less justice to

Carnot—directly “organized victory” in the past; it remains the “powerful brain” of the German army, securing efficiency and readiness for war, and guiding military policy as a whole upon consistent and reasoned lines by which alone wise economy can be exercised. Books have been written to explain the functions of the German staff, and Mr. Spenser Wilkinson in particular has endeavoured to make clear its vital importance as the directing “brain of an army.”

During many years before the outbreak of the unfortunate war in South Africa *The Times* has frequently striven to point out the palpable evils and the scandalous waste which have necessarily resulted from our persistent neglect to provide what General Brackenbury aptly termed a “central thinking department.” It would be easy to fill a substantial volume with instances of the inevitable effects of this inexplicable neglect. The bombardment of the forts of Alexandria before an adequate landing force was at hand, the surrender of Heligoland to Germany for a totally inadequate consideration, the ridiculous project for pretending to fortify London, the amazing proceedings which led to the adoption of the Nile route to Khartum in 1884 and consequently to failure, the successive costly schemes of coast fortification hatched in hole-and-corner fashion and defying first principles, the wildly conflicting statements of Cabinet Ministers in regard to important questions of national defence, the painful groping for a military policy in the absence of adequate knowledge—these and many more ills for which the nation has paid heavily are all due to the want of an organized Great General Staff.

The plain warnings of *The Times* were ignored, and when the war in South Africa broke out the military situation was totally misunderstood, with the gravest results. The Intelligence branch had collected a mass of information which proved wonderfully accurate; but

there was no one to study the facts and figures with a view to ascertain their practical significance. Thus the Commander-in-Chief professed surprise at the numbers and the armaments of the Boers, although details as to both were at his disposal, and the Cabinet was led to trust irresponsible advisers, who represented views prevalent in Johannesburg, but knew nothing of the character and intentions of the Boers, and were totally ignorant of Dutch history. A conscientious perusal of Motley's works or of our own Dutch wars might have provided enlightenment ; but Ministers have no time for studies of this nature. Thus, as the general public is now beginning to realize, arose a whole series of mistakes and illusions from the effects of which the nation has suffered, and is still suffering, in gallant lives which cannot be replaced and in resources not easily restored.

The most vital lesson of the war, and that which is least likely to be understood, is the want of a Great General Staff. The Army contains plenty of ability, but it has no organized brain power. Ministers have been known to complain bitterly of the military advice tendered to them, and that advice has frequently been misleading or incoherent. The reason is evident. It is futile to expect a Commander-in-Chief, an Adjutant-General, or a Quartermaster-General, absorbed in the multifarious duties of administration, impossibly commingled with executive functions, to study the varied needs of "inevitable" and other wars, to work out the complex problems of such an Empire as ours, to foresee and to reduce to a logical form the requirements which any turn in the European kaleidoscope may call forth, to be ready with carefully reasoned advice whenever it is wanted. The hasty surmises of flurried officials, or the random suggestions of uninformed committees promiscuously collected are no substitutes for the deliberate conclusions of trained minds accustomed to specialized study. It is by means of organized brain power

scientifically applied that Germany succeeds in beating us in too many fields of activity. A modern army which is unprovided with a "central thinking department" is at the mercy of chance and of the caprice of individuals. In peace it must be ill-organized and unready; in war it will be indifferently handled.

The functions of a Great General Staff are twofold. In the first place, it collects and co-ordinates information which it applies to the unravelling of military problems of all kinds so as to be able to place before the statesman the military aspect of any question of national importance. In the second place, it trains men for special duties in peace and in war. The interesting work of General von Verdy du Vernois gives a lifelike picture of the work of the German General Staff at Headquarters during a great war. Other writers have described at length the functions of the staff officer acting as the expert assistant of the general commanding in the field. We are thus able to understand how the system operates throughout the whole structure of the German army, guiding, inspiring, foreseeing, and thus, in General Brackenbury's words, "acting as the powerful brain of the military body." The result, in war, we have seen; while we know that in peace the fabric of the German army is sedulously watched and tended, that reforms are constantly and consistently applied on reasoned lines, that individual caprices are duly checked, that military talent is discovered, and that all that is implied in organization for war is maintained at a standard worthy of a great nation. We know that, in Germany, contingencies of many kinds have been fully studied in advance, that the elementary principles of national defence are not matters of public discussion, that military policy is framed in conformity with real requirements, and that efficiency is combined with rigid economy. Our military problems are more complex than those of Germany, and our Army is a peculiarly intricate structure. We need

organized brain power far more than any of our rivals, yet we disdain the common-sense methods by which they achieve marked success, and we cherish the baseless belief that our inherent capabilities are so great as to enable us to dispense with the business-like procedure necessary in the case of less gifted peoples.

In administration, civil or military, the grouping of definite duties in trained hands is of vital importance. At the War Office, as a recent committee seems to have rediscovered, the definition of duties and of responsibilities is radically defective. The duties of a Great General Staff are, however, not allotted to or discharged by anyone. The notorious telegram "Unmounted men preferred," addressed to the finest nursery of mounted men in the world, was only a casual indication of the total absence of any "central thinking department" in the office which undertakes to prepare for and to conduct operations of war. The absence of organized brain power at the head is naturally extended to the whole military body. We maintain a relatively enormous number of staff officers, to whose numbers we make immense promiscuous additions whenever we go to war. Nevertheless, we not only fail to provide the means for carrying out the duties of a Great General Staff in peace or in war, but our system is such as actually to prevent the discharge of those duties.

It is not too much to say that the failure to provide trained general staff officers with functions properly defined has been one of the most fruitful sources of disaster in South Africa. Instances could be multiplied, but the loss of a valuable convoy at the commencement of the turning movement by which Kimberley was relieved is perhaps the most striking. Although the facts have never been made public, it is clear that faulty staff arrangements were mainly responsible for a loss which led to most serious results. On numerous other occasions there have been mistakes, such as the neglect strongly to occupy the

waterworks at Bloemfontein, or omissions, such as the total failure to recognize the crucial importance of Hlangwani Hill before the hopeless battle of Colenso, which, combined with badly-worded orders, have directly caused unnecessary losses and have hampered the progress of the campaign.

So conspicuous have been the fiascoes thus arising that special stupidity on the part of our officers has been inferred. This explanation is not by any means just, and it is not required to account for the facts. The real causes of our too frequent blunders are the entire absence of anything approximating to an organized Great General Staff and the confusion of duties which has been deliberately introduced into our military system.

## XVIII

### WARSHIP DESIGN

(“*The Times*,” 8 and 15 October, 1913.)

I had for many years closely followed the evolution of Warships and, on returning from India in 1913, I returned to this question, and *The Times* permitted me to contribute three critical articles in which it was suggested that the great vacillations in building policy were partly due to insufficient study of War, and that, as before the passing of the Naval Defence Act of 1889, a Committee on design should be assembled to supply guidance. I had unsuccessfully opposed the construction of the *Dreadnought* in which some features were reactionary, while the stimulus to competition which our sudden increase of tonnage induced favoured the policy of von Tirpitz, added hugely to our expenditure, and decreased our relative strength on the day of battle. Nine months after these articles appeared we were at war, and some of my forecasts proved accurate ; but I was wrong in discounting the naval value of airships. The Zeppelins did render some little service to the German fleet.

SINCE 1889 the problems involved in shipbuilding policy have become vastly more complex ; doubts and uncertainties have multiplied, while the cost of ships of all classes has enormously increased, and the consequence of mistakes is, therefore, far more serious. There has never been a time when the application of scientific methods to the elucidation of naval questions was so imperatively demanded as the present day. Science has been brought to bear with bewildering effect upon the development of naval *matériel* in all its various aspects. The absence of the scientific spirit in dealing with the many and sometimes conflicting claims of the several elements upon which naval strength depends has long been painfully apparent to



every close student of the lessons of war. The inevitable results can be traced in mistakes which could be veiled only in peace conditions, in decisions at which no competent advisory body supplied with adequate materials for free and full discussion could have arrived, and in a large aggregate waste of public funds. In place of orderly evolution guided by reason there have been spasmodic new departures, followed by reversion to type, but again repeated as if past experience was of no value.

In recent years the tendency to plunge into extremes has been marked. Tremendous changes have been introduced—changes far too great to rest on the unsupported opinions of a single Board of Admiralty—and subsequent attempts to justify them by misleading phrases invented *post hoc* serve only to create the impression that they were never properly discussed or considered. The most cursory study of the erratic forms which shipbuilding policy has assumed since the introduction of steam and steel reveals with startling clearness a total absence of guiding principles and a lamentable readiness to accept theories based on pure speculation and opposed to facts known or easily ascertained. The hopeless breakdown of such theories when brought to the test of war has not had the effect of inculcating caution, and even, when obviously discredited, they have been resuscitated and claimed as new discoveries.

Turning to the broad principles which should govern shipbuilding policy, the teaching of war for centuries is curiously consistent. The great advances in propulsion, in ship construction, in weapons, and in means of protection have not produced the results too confidently expected. On the contrary, fighting in the new material conditions has powerfully reaffirmed the lessons derived from the experience of the old wooden sailing navies. The battle of Tsushima was won by the same means which gave victory at Trafalgar, and the strategic characteristics of the campaigns which culminated in these two decisive naval

actions present essential points of similarity. Weapons govern tactics and modify methods, but the dominating tactical object to-day is precisely the same as that which Nelson strove to attain. "Changes in the motive power only affect the time required to move from one position to another. They do not influence the tactical formations to be adopted, which must be those best suited to the effective use of the particular weapon employed."

From the days of the Armada to those of Tsushima, the gun has proved to be the only weapon by which decisive naval victories can be won. There is no reason to suppose that this condition will be changed in the near future. We may, therefore, safely lay down as a law of naval war that tactics must now, as always, be directed to bringing the greatest number of effective guns to bear upon an enemy at effective ranges in the shortest time. The three-decker, with a broadside of fifty-two guns, represented, in Nelson's day, the closest approach to this ideal. As effective ranges increased the fulfilment of the law could best be attained by other means than the concentration of guns in three tiers on a single ship. The later development of a high speed of fire from individual guns still further facilitated dispersion, which has obvious advantages. In land warfare we have seen precisely the same evolution arising from precisely the same causes; but the great extension of the battle line between the days of Waterloo and those of Mukden introduced difficulties of its own. An army ranged on a front of 45 miles cannot quickly reinforce by movement from a flank a unit threatened with destruction. In the case of a fleet, this difficulty is far less serious.

Another lesson enforced by the unbroken experience of naval war and worthy to be regarded as an immutable law is that victories can be won only by the offensive—tactical and strategical—and that defensive ideals are futile and dangerous. Improvements in armour and the development

of shell power have in no way affected the truth firmly grasped by Nelson and forcibly stated by Farragut. "The best protection against an enemy's fire," he wrote, "is a well directed fire from our own guns." This dictum, in the words of Rear-Admiral A. T. Mahan, embodies "one of the profoundest of all military truths, easily confessed, but with difficulty lived up to, and which in these days of armour protection needs to be diligently recalled as a qualifying consideration."

How far have these laws of war been applied, or violated, in the recent progress of our shipbuilding policy?

The advent of the latest Dreadnoughts and Invincibles effected a violent change in naval ideals, in warship design, and in national policy. The change seems to have been based upon a political forecast which has been disastrously falsified. Instead of humanity being staggered, as was expected, the result has been to give a powerful stimulus to foreign competition and at the same time to depreciate our own Fleet in our own eyes, with the necessary consequence of heavily inflated public expenditure. The changes consisted in :

1. A sudden large increase of speed.
2. The substitution of ten 12-inch guns for four in the battleship and eight 12-inch for four 9.2-inch in cruisers.
3. The abolition of the secondary armament ; and
4. A new distribution of armour.

Speaking broadly, the pendulum had swung back to the all-big-gun *Inflexible*, immensely exaggerated. Sir William White shortly before his death explained the nature of the change. In forty-two years, from the *Warrior* to the *King Edward VII*, the increase of length in battleships had been 45 feet, and of deep load displacement 8,300 tons. At one step length was suddenly increased by 65 feet and displacement by 4,700 tons. It is most improbable that any committee composed of Admirals with large sea experience and students of their profession would have accepted the

new designs. It is equally improbable that any Cabinet which had seriously considered the question would have committed itself to the political miscalculation which has gravely affected the national finances.

The disposition of guns in the *Dreadnought* was one long adopted in the French Navy and wisely abandoned. The return to a discredited arrangement was officially explained by the statement that "it lies in the power of an enemy to force an opponent, who is anxious to engage, to fight an end-on action." Similarly, the sudden increase of speed was explained by the allegation that "it gives the power of choosing the range." These are tactical propositions of a highly disputable character, and nothing except a series of careful trials, easy to carry out, could justify their acceptance.

If it could be assumed that the *Dreadnought* was the result of careful study and not the unhappy product of megalomania, and if we had, therefore, at last reached sound principles, then, obviously, succeeding ships would have shown continuity of design. This was not the case. The later vessels were entitled "super-Dreadnoughts" in order that they might create a terrifying impression; but they quickly began to show violent departures from the type which was to render all preceding battleships "obsolescent." The speed of 21 knots was retained. The arrangement of gun positions, for the revival of which special advantages were claimed, was changed to the *échelon* plan—also previously discredited—in the *Neptunes*, and was again changed in the *Orions*, reverting to the centre line, to which the British Navy had long been accustomed. The abolished secondary armament—which the Germans, who, following the *Dreadnought* policy, had jumped up from 13,200 to 18,200 tons, wisely retained—was restored.

The vagaries of armour in *post-Dreadnoughts* are remarkable. The great length of unprotected waterline in the *Inflexible* and the Admiral class had been the subject

of much criticism. The "soft ends" of some pre-Dreadnoughts had been condemned, and the King Edward VII and Lord Nelson classes were provided with complete belts. In the design of the *Dreadnought* special credit was claimed for the bow and stern protection adopted. This was continued and even heightened at the bow in the Neptunes, and then dropped in the Orions. Internal armour was sparingly applied in the *Dreadnought*, was then extensively used, and was afterwards almost wholly abandoned. It is not here contended that one of these systems was right and the others wrong, but that the amazing instability of opinion even since the *Dreadnought* was designed proves that now, as formerly, no principles which war experience could support have ever been arrived at. One other change must be noticed. In the Dreadnoughts the 12-inch gun was retained, and its power has been recently increased. The Orions carry 13½-inch guns, and a further jump to the 15-inch gun is apparently contemplated. No war experience justifies this return to the large calibres which were tried and deliberately abandoned. No fresh improvement of armour has taken place to render it plausible. No careful inquiry would lead to the acceptance of the greatly increased cost, the reduction of the life of the gun, and the complications involved.

The history of the development of British cruisers supplies abundant evidence of fluctuations of policy plainly due to the lack of clear ideas as to the work required to be done. A Scout class suddenly appeared which was quickly discovered to be totally unfit for scouting and had to be provided with some other employment. Armoured and protected cruisers had fallen into separate classes, which culminated respectively in the *Minotaur* and the *Challenger*. The building of protected cruisers was abruptly stopped, and the sudden scrapping of vessels of this class before their period of usefulness had elapsed led to a serious deficiency of craft of which Great Britain would have real

need in war. The pendulum has again swung, and the deficiency will doubtless be made good.

In the armoured class it is difficult to assign any course other than unreasoning megalomania for the jump from the *Minotaur* of 14,600 tons and about 23 knots speed to an *Invincible* of 17,250 tons and 26 knots, and the still greater jump to a *Lion* of 27,000 tons and over 28 knots. The tactical employment of these huge ships cannot have been considered; and when it was pointed out that they were costly battleships of excessive speed with inferior protection, they were entitled "battle cruisers"; but their use was not explained. Clearly, if they are to lie in the line they, or the battleships, must be wrongly designed. In any case, the great sacrifices made to obtain exaggerated speed needs justification on rational grounds which has not yet been forthcoming. It is now probable that the type will be dropped.

Most unfortunately the country was committed to the Dreadnought policy before the decisive battle of Tsushima had been fought. It may fairly be said that the lessons of the Russo-Japanese war, which are of immense practical value, conflict with this policy in most important respects. In the careful and illuminating studies of the naval campaign which Admiral Custance has made will be found teaching of supreme importance to the British Navy.

The present Board of Admiralty has succeeded to an inheritance full of difficulties for which it is not responsible. The problems and the uncertainties confronting it are many. Airships are not likely to become an element of naval strength; but their capabilities must be carefully studied. Hydroplanes, on the other hand, promise to be a valuable aid to offensive naval war and will doubtless undergo continuous development. The question of oil is complex and vastly important. It may be expected that the Royal Commission now sitting will produce an exhaustive report, and materials for judgment will then be

available. The advantages to the warships of oil fuel are undoubted; but we possess at the heart of the Empire an abundant supply of the best steam coal in the world and the Imperial sources of oil are at present limited and undeveloped. Before committing our battle fleet to a change which is structurally irrevocable, it must be proved that an abundant annual supply can be absolutely guaranteed, that an immense reserve for war can be built up and always maintained, and that the advantages will justify the heavily increased charges involved.

Meanwhile, the great growth of naval expenditure—in part at least due to our own impolicy—renders it vital that mistakes involving loss of fighting power should be reduced to the minimum that reason and foresight can guarantee. As three distinguished Admirals declared in 1888, it is by the Navy that we “must stand or fall”; and, having regard to the magnitude of the burden which the nation is now forced to bear, no care in the direction of naval progress can be too great. Past experience plainly shows that changing Admiralty Boards, in which the civil element may be dominant, cannot unassisted be trusted to bring every fresh step to the test of ascertained facts, to check the baneful influence of unsupported theories, to clear up tactical problems, and to subordinate the attractions of defensive methods to the supreme necessity of preparing to wage offensive war. So much cannot be expected from officials overtaxed by the exacting claims of daily business always increasing in amount.

So far as can be judged, we are now drifting without guidance in a direction which will soon give us battleships of 40,000 tons, costing over £4,000,000. At the same time, there have been indications that, in view of the development of the submarine, these monsters might not be trusted to navigate the North Sea. If the submarine can accomplish a fraction of what is claimed for it, the policy of building exaggerated battleships cannot be maintained. In

Nelson's view, "only numbers can annihilate," and the long ranges of the present day permit dispersion of armament in ships of moderate size, the loss of one or two of which would not entail such a serious diminution of fleet strength as that of hyper-super-Dreadnoughts. Here is a point which needs careful study by experienced naval officers, who can give undivided attention to it.

As the submarine apparently cannot fight the submarine, we must seek to attack it as we ultimately did the now obsolete torpedo-boat. It is possible that the aeroplane and the light cruiser or improved destroyer may prove effective rejoinders. Here, again, study is urgently needed in order that the inevitable limitations of the submarine may be fully grasped; and, since the submarine obtains safety only by accepting a great increase in the difficulty of using her only weapon, limitations—on the high seas especially—must exist.

The question of armour needs careful investigation in the light of the war experience available. "The received doctrine tends to arm ships with a small number of guns ever increasing in size and to the use of armour ever increasing in thickness and weight." Is this "doctrine" in accordance with the lessons of the Russo-Japanese war, or is it not? A direct answer is evidently possible. The advantage of speed in a fleet action lends itself perfectly to determination by well-devised trials, and the degree of superiority required to confer advantage can be accurately ascertained.

A scientific analysis of the relative power of two such different ships as the *Dreadnought* and the *King Edward VII*, taking into account the greater target presented by the former, can be made on the basis of battle practice, and an idea of the relative number of hits in a given time can be arrived at with due regard to the greatly inferior stability of the gun platform provided by the later ship. Present ideas of the fighting power of warships are evidently nebulous, and the importance of intensity of fire—strikingly



illustrated at Tsushima—has been ignored. Nevertheless, it must be clear that, at ranges at which all the guns of two ships can do effective damage, the ship that makes the greatest number of initial hits will inevitably reduce her antagonist's fire, and will, therefore, not only protect herself in the most effectual way but will rapidly establish decisive superiority.

Perhaps the most important point of all is that the discussion of such questions as have been touched upon should be associated with definite tactical ideas by which the ram and the "single-blow theory" could have been killed at birth. If these questions were referred to a strong committee of well-chosen naval officers, with a statesman of experience as chairman, for investigation on the basis of reason and known facts, it is impossible not to believe that the Admiralty would gain welcome and needed support, and that new light would shine where fog now prevails. Evidence taken by and information supplied to such a committee would naturally be confidential; but a general statement of results such as that arrived at in connection with the Naval Defence Act would give confidence to the public and strength to the Admiralty.

Lastly, it is to be remembered that the present tendency is towards over-concentration of thought upon the technicalities of *matériel*. Our system of training is producing specialists of all kinds; but it does not lead the best brains of our young officers to the study of such matters as have been dealt with in these articles. Definite tactical ideas which can be acquired only by experience at sea are of vital importance, since technical superiority cannot save a badly-handled fleet from disastrous defeat. The great lessons of war have not changed with the advance of mechanical science; and from them alone can be drawn the inspiration which will command victory when the naval forces of the Empire are brought face to face with the supreme ordeal.

## XIX

### THE BLOCKADE OF GERMANY

*(The speech republished below was delivered in the House of Lords on 20 December, 1915, in a debate on the Motion of the Earl of Portsmouth, "That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty for Papers relating to a reported Treaty or Arrangement with Great Britain whereby articles exported from Great Britain can be re-exported from Denmark to other countries.")*

Commodities vital to the prolongation of the War poured into Germany during the early months under the disastrous provisions of the Declaration of London, as Mr. Asquith admitted on 20th July, 1915. There was subsequently a tightening of the blockade; but many leaks remained until America declared war in April, 1917. The paralysing of our sea power when it was most needed and when our Navy was perfectly able to exercise it, weighed heavily on me, and over and over again I tried to draw attention in the House of Lords to the relative failure of the blockade. This speech, which the late Lord Portsmouth urged me to make on his motion, deals largely with the forgotten "Danish Agreement" made with a body which contained astute Germans. The Government refused information as to the terms of a unique instrument. Of its effects I have no knowledge, but I was able to show later that important commodities were freely reaching Germany, and the shocking revelations which Rear-Admiral Consett patriotically revealed, give some idea of what was in progress. The losses of life and treasure, due to our neglect to use our most potent weapon, will always remain a harrowing reflection.

MY LORDS, the real question which is raised by this Danish Agreement is this, Are we using our splendid Navy in the best possible way to bring this war to an end? That is a very grave question; it is one which ought to be fully discussed, and it can only be so discussed in present circumstances in your Lordships' House. Nearly half a

century ago Mr. Gladstone wrote these remarkable and most prophetic words :

“ It is hard to say whether or when our countrymen will be fully alive to the vast advantages they derive from consummate means of naval defence. . . . Our lot would, perhaps, be too much favoured if we possessed, together with such advantages, a full sense of what they are. Where the Almighty grants exceptional and peculiar benefits He sometimes permits by counterpoise an insensibility to their value.”

Those words have a deep significance for us in the crisis in which we are placed to-day.

We began this war under many disabilities, but with one enormous advantage. Relatively and absolutely our Fleet was far stronger than it had ever been at the commencement of any of the great naval wars of the past, and within a few months the Navy handed over to His Majesty's Government the gift of the sea. That was an achievement which was impossible in sailing days, and which surprised even many close students of naval warfare. What use did we make of it? That is a question which will have to be examined with care by the future historian of this war. Meanwhile we know what we did not do with it. A short conference with men who understood the question would have made clear the fact that cotton was a vital commodity in modern war, and that it had practically replaced sulphur and saltpetre which were vital in the wars of the past. His Majesty's Government must have trusted some adviser with that half-knowledge which is proverbially dangerous, and it was slowly that the truth dawned. But at last, on 20th July, the Prime Minister used these words :

“ I am not myself satisfied with the existing state of affairs. I believe that a great deal of this material, which

is a necessary ingredient in some kinds of ammunition, reaches the enemy which ought not to reach the enemy."

All this had been pointed out more than six months before by Sir William Ramsay, one of our greatest chemists. But it was not until August, after the war had been going on a year, that cotton was made contraband.

We know fairly well what happened in the meantime. The imports of cotton into Holland and the Scandinavian countries in the eight months from 31st August of last year to 30th April of this year increased from 57,800 bales in the corresponding period of 1913-14 to 1,322,100 bales in this period of eight months—an excess considerably over one-and-a-quarter million bales. Probably the whole of this vast excess did not go into Germany, but a great part of it must have done; and Germany also drew cotton from several other sources. Early in the period of the war the German Government itself undertook measures for shipping part of the American crop of 1914. That was, I believe, told to our late Government, who were at the same time offered an option on so much of that crop as would have secured the ready acquiescence of the Southern cotton interests in making cotton contraband at that time. More than that, the price was so low that it would have been an excellent investment. But nothing was done.

Take one other case. A little inquiry would have shown that oil is one of the most important elements in food-stuffs, and also that it can be used for the manufacture of nitro-glycerine, which the Germans employ to a considerable extent in their propellants. It has been stated publicly that as much as 33,440 tons of linseed and other oils were imported into Holland in excess of the normal requirements in the eleven months which ended in November. Sir William Ramsay tells us that this would make 18,000 tons of heavy gun ammunition. If

ever full investigation is made into this question, I am afraid that some scandals will be revealed. I could quote a great many more figures, but I will not weary your Lordships with statistics. It is sufficient to say that other commodities of extreme importance to Germany have gone and are still going into adjacent neutral countries largely in excess of the normal amounts imported by those countries. My Lords, facts of this kind have made a painful impression in the country. It is certain that had Germany not received indispensable commodities of many kinds the war would have ended before this; and it is absolutely certain that our Navy could have prevented these excess imports from going into Germany. Is it to be wondered at that there is a widespread belief that the "insensibility" which Mr. Gladstone realized has prevailed in our councils?

After seven months of war our policy seemed at last to have settled down upon definite and clear lines. On 1st March the Prime Minister made this very important announcement—to which both the noble Lord and the noble Earl referred—that our Fleet henceforth was to take steps to prevent "commodities of any kind" from entering or leaving Germany; and, further than that, all "juridical niceties" were to be swept aside. When the Order in Council was issued ten days after that announcement, it seemed that at last the gift of the sea was to be turned to the fullest account. It is curious that the policy of the Prime Minister, announced in those words, is exactly identical with the policy of Germany which was most lucidly stated by Count Caprivi in the Reichstag in 1892. Count Caprivi said:

"I am of opinion that the cutting off of hostile commerce in a naval war will remain an essential means, an *ultima ratio*, because nothing else remains. Whoever wages war wants to reach the goal of war, and if he is energetic he attains that by the application of all means, and to this

goal belongs in naval war the cutting off of hostile trade. No one can renounce that."

That was the policy which, doubtless, Germany feared that we would adopt. By means of her submarines, which she used in the most ruthless fashion, she attempted to apply that policy to the very end to ourselves, and after 18th February she proceeded to violate every law of sea warfare, so that now there is hardly a neutral which has not had a ship sunk and some of its citizens murdered by the German Navy.

When war broke out, it was open to us to follow the course which was taken by the Northern States in the great Civil War. They treated supplies of all kinds for the Southern States as absolute contraband, including even such articles as chloroform and surgical instruments, which we should certainly not so include. They also applied the doctrine of continuous voyage most rigorously, and they set up a blockade which we recognized, though we need not have done so because for a long time it was thoroughly ineffective. If to this policy we had added a recognition of the right of neutrals to receive their normal imports, and if, in certain special cases, we had purchased stocks of raw materials, the war would have been brought to a comparatively speedy end. But because we have carried on the war without any definite and consistent naval policy, tens of thousands of gallant lives will still have to fall. We know that the difficulties of dealing with neutrals are very great; but I think that any clear and consistent plan would have aroused less irritation among neutrals than arrangements constantly varying which left the neutral in doubt as to what he could do and what he could not do. In the United States I believe that a display of firmness and stability of purpose would have been welcomed in the best quarters because many Americans know full well that it is our Fleet that stands between them and

German aggression. One can imagine what the tone of the Notes from Wilhelmstrasse would have been had it not been for our Grand Fleet in the North Sea. For seven months of the war we acted upon a modified version of the disastrous Declaration of London, and the enemy secured thereby many advantages. Subsequently the action of the Navy was regulated by an Order in Council of 11th March, tempered by an unknown number of secret Agreements. All that we know is that very large quantities of commodities have passed to the enemy since the Prime Minister's important statement of policy on 1st March, and that the influx of those commodities has enabled the enemy to prolong the war.

My Lords, it is because of what has happened in the past that the country looks with natural suspicion upon this Danish Agreement. A Danish correspondent, writing to the *Morning Post* the other day from Copenhagen, drew attention to the fact that the Chambers with which negotiations were made contained many German Danes ; and he went on to point out that :

“ There is no doubt whatever that Denmark has been doing an enormous trade with Germany and Austria during the last seventeen months, and the prosperity of all here is too apparent, and that Denmark has received far, far more of everything than was necessary for her own use. You have helped in this, and your new Agreement will help much more than ever for Germany to be fed, the war prolonged, and your blockade made a joke. This Agreement is very wrong and should be cancelled, and you should wake up and stir up your officials or dismiss them.”

I believe that that is not an inaccurate view of the matter.

There are only two certainties in this Agreement. One is that large quantities of most useful commodities will pass into Germany ; the other is that many people will

make very large sums of money. But the uncertainties are many and most disturbing. I will not quote the Agreement, because I believe that would not be proper. But I must point out that the commodities which are to enter Germany are those of which Germany has great need. Unless the whole of the Agreement were most carefully examined by expert chemists and by expert manufacturers it is quite impossible to ascertain what can be made out of these commodities ; and, if they were even partially manufactured, they would then be able to go into Germany apparently in unlimited quantities under new names. I do not wish to criticize the Foreign Office officials for a moment, but I do say this—that the spectacle of Foreign Office officials negotiating with persons whose Teutonic names the noble Earl (Lord Portsmouth) read out the other day is most pathetic. In this as in many other matters we have pitted amateurs against professionals, and we know quite well to what that leads. Until this Agreement has been carefully examined by experts on this side it is absolutely impossible for the Government to know exactly what it involves. It is for that reason that I am very sorry that the Government will not take the people into their confidence and make the Agreement public.

The terms of this Agreement are known to the German Government, and the details which have come from German sources have been purposely altered in order to mislead us. The terms are also known to many Danish and German firms, to Swedes, and to Americans. I even believe the Agreement itself can be bought at a price. In these circumstances surely there is no possibility of concealment except from the people who ought to know the details. One great objection to this Agreement is this. The Foreign Office has negotiated, not with the Danish Government, but with representatives of a large number of private firms. Some of those firms may be purely German ;



of the rest there must be quite a large number of a "predominantly enemy character," to borrow a phrase from Lord Halsbury's Bill. I am not quite certain, therefore, that the Foreign Office has not brought itself within the scope of our laws prohibiting dealing with enemy aliens.

In his interesting speech last Thursday the noble Marquess (Lord Lansdowne) said that "we have endeavoured to arrive at an understanding" that when the normal amount of commodities required by neutrals for their own consumption is exceeded, enemy destination is implied. If only that rule had been strictly enforced, many of our difficulties would have been avoided. But the noble Marquess went on to say :

"Look what happens. You hold up ships carrying cargo which you suspect is going to the enemy. You may find that you have let through an amount of a particular cargo representing the full limit to which the neutral country is entitled for its own consumption. But if, as time goes on, you find more cargoes coming in and the papers of the ships which carry them are in order and there is no proof of enemy destination, you are absolutely helpless, and you have really to acquiesce and see all these supplies passing through, in spite of your precautions."

But, my Lords, we are fighting for our existence as a nation, and if we had enforced the rule that excess imports implied enemy destination, then these difficulties would have disappeared and further excess cargoes would not continue to arrive.

What is happening at the present time is this. Our officers board a ship bound for a Dutch port ; they find her full of iron ore, and the captain says that it is all perfectly correct and his papers are in order. They put a prize crew on board and take the ship to a Scottish port, and the captain, finding himself captured, admits that the whole of the ore is for Krupps and says that there are

other consignments of the same article coming on behind. All this is duly reported. But after a few days a telegram is received ordering the release of the ship. My Lords, this is heartbreaking for our gallant officers and seamen, who often have to risk their lives in boarding these ships in bad weather. It has been said in another place that the Admiralty approved of this Agreement. The term "Admiralty" is sometimes very loosely used; and it is quite impossible to believe that the Board of Admiralty, sitting as a Board, could ever have approved of this Danish Agreement. The noble Marquess pointed out, most justly, that the geographical position of Denmark exposes her very much to pressure from Germany, and he rather indicated that we ought to allow Denmark to obtain and export important commodities to Germany in order to relieve that pressure. I hardly think that we are bound to act in this way. It has suited Germany exceedingly well that Denmark and Holland should remain neutral. Otherwise both would have been treated like Belgium, or forced into belligerency some time ago. If Germany were to win the war, the independence of these two small countries would be gone for ever, even if their territories were not annexed, as would certainly happen to a strip of Holland. So that the real interest of these neutrals and of all neutrals all over the world is that the war should end quickly and that the Allies should win. The noble Marquess said most truly that—

"There are large profits to be made. There is corruption on every side."

That is a great danger, because Agreements such as this build up powerful vested interests in the prolongation of the war.

I will touch on only one other point. This Agreement and some others are negotiated by the Foreign Office, not with the Governments of foreign Powers, but with the

representatives of private traders. But the High Contracting Parties on our side are not the Foreign Office or the Government. They are the people of this country, the people of the Dominions and of our Colonies, the people of India, and the Allied nations. Surely that is a strong reason for careful expert examination of this Agreement and for the abandonment of secrecy in regard to it. The effect of the pressure which the Navy has been permitted tardily and still most imperfectly to exercise is beginning to be felt. The difference in tone between the German Chancellor's recent speech and that of August last tells its tale. I believe that the most humane course in the interests of the civilized world is that our Sea Power should be used to the utmost extent. Among the many grave mistakes which have marked the conduct of this war I regard the neglect to use our most potent weapon to the best effect as the most serious, because it has reacted upon our operations all over the many theatres of war. The Navy has splendidly upheld its finest traditions. Its resourcefulness in dealing with the submarine menace is above all praise. The skill and daring of our young submarine officers have been brilliant. But we have erred grievously, either because of the "insensibility" of which Mr. Gladstone wrote, or in consequence of that amazing tenderness towards German interests of which we have had too many signs since this war began. If we are to bring the war to a victorious end and save our Empire from destruction we must translate the words of the Prime Minister into deeds, and we must put an end to all secret Agreements.

## XX

# A GREAT LESSON OF THE NAVAL WAR

(*"Nineteenth Century and After," June, 1921.*)

The special conditions which alone enabled the Grand Fleet in the North Sea to be held at all times in readiness for action seemed to be inadequately realized. A battle fleet, in the days of submarines and aircraft, requires the attendant support of a host of auxiliary craft. Frequent dockings and repairs are essential. Following my study in 1899 of *The Limitations of Naval Force* (p. 169) I, therefore, attempted to explain the added "Limitations" which now restrict the field of action of battle fleets. Judging from some recently expressed opinions, I am doubtful whether, either here or in America, the specially favourable conditions existing in 1914-18 are fully recognized.

NEITHER in the confused controversy in regard to the future of the battleship, nor in the wholly inadequate debate in the House of Commons, can any clear indication of one of the greatest lessons of the Naval War be discerned. The geographical and strategic conditions of the mighty conflict were special and peculiar. No one can say that they will never repeat themselves; but, for the present at least, this cannot be.

The Austrian Navy, controlled by the Italian fleet with French and British assistance, exercised little influence upon the situation. It followed that, until the intervention of America, the contest devolved mainly upon two great Naval Powers, each possessing powerful battle fleets based upon its home ports and operating in its home waters, and these waters—the North Sea and the Channel—were common to both in the sense that they were within short striking distance.

The strategic conditions, so far as the battle fleets are concerned, were, therefore, these. Germany, with the weaker force, could keep her ships secure and ready to emerge from their harbours at any time which she might select. The advantage of the Kiel Canal, in providing her with a double egress into the North Sea, did not materialize, as was expected; but this important waterway had the effect of coupling up her ports to serve in keeping her fleet in readiness for an excursion by way of the Heligoland Bight.

On the other hand, the Grand Fleet had to be held at all times prepared to meet the High Seas Fleet, with the disadvantage of not knowing precisely when the occasion would arise. Such were briefly the conditions with which the British Navy was forced to contend. Its vital function was to maintain command of the North Sea, which entailed the necessity of seeking a fleet action whenever it was challenged. So long as it was in a position to fight in superior force whenever required, the command of the North Sea could not be wrested from it. Until it was decisively defeated, that command could not pass to the enemy, and incidentally no invasion of this country was possible. Such a position, as I have often pointed out, did not exclude swift naval raids upon the coast-line, which the Germans attempted, and which, in spite of their good luck, proved obviously futile. If this general statement is correct, Mr. Churchill's amazing pronouncements that "our silent attack on the vital interests of the enemy" sufficed for our needs, that "no obligation of war obliges us to go further," and that there was "no strategic cause" impelling us to fight off the Danish coast, contrast painfully with the principles of naval policy which our greatest seamen have bequeathed for our guidance. They, however, had not to consider the special dangers which submarine and mine warfare has introduced, and which imposed inexorable limitations upon our Grand Fleet.

What was the nature of those limitations? In the first place, secure ports where the crews could obtain rest were essential, and these ports could not be far apart, otherwise the fleet would not be able to combine in time to meet the enemy and would be liable to be defeated in detail. The battleships which fought at Jutland came from three ports. At each port, facilities for fuelling and for receiving the various supplies which a fleet requires must either be forthcoming as at Rosyth, or be capable of being continuously and securely forwarded by sea as at Scapa. Otherwise, the fleet could not be kept in readiness to meet the enemy at all times. Then means of docking<sup>1</sup> and repairing great ships must evidently be close at hand, more especially in the case of a war of long duration.

So much for the vital needs of the battle fleet; but they are only part of the requirements of a great naval force in the present day. The battleships, when they go to sea in an enemy's home waters, must be accompanied by large numbers of light cruisers, destroyers, submarines, mine-sweepers, mine-layers, seaplane carriers and other craft. All these auxiliaries have the same general requirements as the battleships. They must have secure ports where their crews can obtain rest, and these ports must be so situated that every unit forming part of the fleet can join the flag at short notice and can be kept in readiness to do so. They also require constant coaling or oiling, if this condition is to be fulfilled, apart from ammunition, provisions and miscellaneous supplies. They will—the destroyers especially—need constant repairs, and means of docking them must be within easy distance. Light-draught vessels will of

<sup>1</sup> During the war 194 dry-dockings of battleships and 60 of cruisers were required. There is at present no British dock outside the United Kingdom which will receive the *Hood*; but three large floating docks were handed over by the Germans, and may be sent to distant stations.

course have a greater choice of ports than the heavy ships ; but their requirements, though less in degree, are—in proportion to tonnage—greater in kind.

Clearly naval war, under steam, entailed the fulfilment of some of these requirements in such conditions—two opposing battle fleets in the same home waters—before the advent of the submarine and mine, which have introduced new needs of great importance. And evidently the opportunities for the employment of the submarine and the mine are greatest in the home waters of a belligerent if he elects to make use of them. In the war, the Germans, when they decided to make a piratical attack on commerce a main object, were forced to employ a considerable number of their submarines beyond the North Sea and the Channel. The menace to the Grand Fleet was, therefore, less than it might have been, and considerably less than it may be in the future if a belligerent restricted his submarine activities to the defence of near waters. Yet that menace helped to force upon the Grand Fleet the conditions which I have attempted to describe.

The sea mine, moored in deep waters, operating by contact and laid in accordance with objects, temporary or permanent, arising in the course of naval hostilities, was first employed in the Russo-Japanese War. The Germans appear to have noted the possibilities of this weapon and made careful preparations to turn it to account. We were caught with no effective type of sea mine, and the loss of the *Audacious* was an unpleasant warning. Great efforts were made to make good the deficiency, and ultimately the number of such mines laid by the British and American Navies in the North Sea was very large, while the invention of the paravane gave some measure of protection to our warships. Here again, the advantages accruing to a belligerent in his own waters where mine-layers can go to and fro between their bases and the areas selected for minefields are undoubted, although

mines in small numbers can, as was proved in the war, be laid at long distances from home ports.

That the difficult conditions which existed in the North Sea were combated and that, when the chance of a great battle presented itself, the Grand Fleet, with its host of necessary concomitants, was ready to act, not only involved a huge organization, but immense resources near at hand. I maintain that the essential requirements of such a fleet could not have been met *except in its home waters*. The whole distance from Scapa Flow to the mouth of the Elbe is only about 500 miles and to Rosyth less than 200 miles. Along the British coast for 750 miles, from Moray Firth to Plymouth, there are numerous ports, some of them capable of receiving the largest ships. And behind these ports were the whole of the resources of Britain with those of America which could be drawn upon. These resources, available by reason of geographical position, enabled the Grand Fleet to discharge its difficult functions. But for their existence, that fleet could not have been maintained, and nowhere else in the Empire could a naval force of half its strength, confronted by an enemy battle fleet, be kept in being for more than a short time. Similarly, behind the High Seas Fleet lay the whole resources of Germany, and only in the North Sea, the Baltic, or the Channel could this fleet have operated. While the proximity of our Northern ports permitted some division of the fleet without endangering the power of rapid combination, the naval force of Germany could be kept concentrated.

Unless these views can be controverted, some vastly important conclusions necessarily follow. The effects, direct and indirect, of the development of the submarine and mine are to add to the power of an inferior battle fleet operating in its home waters, and to place sharp limitations upon a fleet acting at a long distance from its home bases. Assuming no submarines or minefields to have existed in



1914, and that the opposing fleets were in other respects the same, the difficulties with which our Navy had to deal would have been greatly simplified. In other words, the submarine and the mine increased the power of the smaller fleet acting on the defensive in its home waters. Admiral Sir Percy Scott has modified the opinions he advanced in 1914, and, in common with the midshipman whom he repeatedly quotes, he now proclaims the uselessness of the battleship. If Germany had possessed no battle fleet, we could have dispensed with ours; but, as the event clearly proved, the existence of the High Seas Fleet was the most potent factor in the naval war, and our Grand Fleet was the solid basis upon which all our operations rested. Admiral of the Fleet Earl Beatty has emphasized the great value of the battleships to Germany in preventing measures which would have gone far to minimize the submarine activities from which von Tirpitz hoped for and was not far from attaining victory.

While other Powers continue to build battleships, we must do the same; but it is vital to remember their limitations in the present day. To some Americans the menace of the Japanese fleet evidently appeals; because they have failed to grasp a great lesson of the war. From Yokohama to San Francisco the distance is 4,750 miles and behind the Pacific ports of Washington, Oregon and California, distributed along a coast-line of 1,100 miles, are the vast resources of America. Assuming even that the Japanese captured Hawaii and made it into a temporary base, they would still be 2,093 miles from San Francisco, the nearest American port. Surely it must be perfectly clear to everyone who has attempted to study the situation in the North Sea during the war that no large Japanese battle fleet could ever be maintained on the Pacific Coast of America in complete readiness to meet a smaller American fleet resting upon its home ports. Conversely no American fleet could be maintained in the Western Pacific capable of

dealing with a smaller Japanese fleet as we dealt with the High Seas Fleet in the North Sea. The American advanced base, Hawaii, to which everything would have to be brought by sea, is about 3,400 miles from Yokohama, and Manila is about 2,300 miles from Nagasaki. No American fleet, based on the Philippines,<sup>1</sup> could be in a position to meet the Japanese fleet based on its home ports, with all the resources of Japan at its back, and the possibility of drawing upon China, Siberia, and even Europe. The same conditions would present themselves to a British battle fleet in the N.W. Pacific and China Sea in view of the distance of Hong-Kong from Nagasaki.

War between America and Britain is inconceivable, and it is, therefore, unnecessary to point out that we could not maintain a large battle fleet in the Western Atlantic based upon Halifax, Bermuda and the West Indian Islands. The naval strength of America in her adjacent home waters is already amply sufficient, and the battleship programme of Mr. Josephus Daniels has no reasoned justification.

It may be that the capital ship of the future will be less vulnerable to torpedo attack than those of pre-Jutland types. The Germans secured some measure of protection by building capital ships unfitted for any theatre of war except the North Sea and the Baltic ; but other limitations, when battleships are employed at long distances from their home ports, will remain, and the principles which I have sought to lay down will be little affected. In the

<sup>1</sup> A recent American writer, commenting on the allocation of territories under the mandatory system, significantly remarks that "the islands which Japan takes form a gigantic quarter-circle off the Eastern coasts of the Philippines, a barrier between the Philippines and America."—"Progress of the World," *North American Review*, January 1921. The dangers of attack by far-ranging submarine craft on supply ships employed to feed temporary or inadequate bases cannot be disregarded.

recent rambling controversy, stress was laid upon air attack as an argument against the retention of the battleship, and it would be most unwise to ignore the increasing potentiality of aircraft. The risks to ships in motion may continue to be moderate, because anti-aircraft armaments will improve; but battle fleets in harbour will provide good targets. It must, however, be evident that ships lying in their home ports can be far more effectively protected than in distant or temporary harbours. Further, aircraft attack must be most intense and most dangerous when it is based upon home air stations at comparatively short distances from its objectives and with the resources of a Great Power behind them, and will be relatively weak when carried on thousands of miles away from those resources and from bases which may have to be extemporized or from aeroplane carriers. On the Western seaboard of America, for example, the Japanese could not make use of aircraft on a scale comparable to that which the Americans could easily develop and maintain. It follows that the air argument against the battleships may prove to be invalid, and that one result of air force is to increase the potency of a battle fleet in its own waters against an enemy coming from a long distance.

The main problem to be solved in a war between two naval Powers remains the same as in the days of Drake and of Nelson. The enemy's battle fleet must be brought to action and decisively defeated, as at Trafalgar and Tsushima, or effectively controlled, as in the North Sea. If either of these conditions is fulfilled, overseas operations will be denied to the weaker belligerent, who will also be sharply restricted in carrying on a cruiser attack on commerce. On the other hand, the stronger of two Naval Powers will find it impossible to fulfil either condition if it is operating at a great distance from its home ports against a well-prepared though weaker enemy having his resources close at hand. In this case, the weaker belli-

gerent may secure considerable freedom when operating in adjacent waters.

The destruction inflicted by German submarines on our mercantile marine has perhaps blinded us to what might have been accomplished by cruisers, but for the control resting upon the Grand Fleet. The performances of the *Emden*, *Karlsruhe*, *Moewe*, and other vessels should, however, provide some enlightenment. The submarine attack, as Earl Beatty has pointed out, was facilitated by the fact that the German High Seas Fleet remained concentrated as a menace, and could not be forced to action and destroyed. This attack was at length defeated by offensive measures tardily organized and capable of being rendered more effective in the future. But for the presence in the North Sea of the Grand Fleet in constant readiness for action, German cruiser operations in distant waters might have attained larger proportions, and the naval war would have assumed different aspects.

Whatever developments of the submarine may be expected, its menace must be greatest in waters adjacent to the territorial bases of the Power which relies upon it. Japanese submarines, for example, could be employed with far greater effect in the N.W. Pacific than off the American coast. I come back, therefore, to the general proposition that, from the strategic point of view, the effect of the submarine and mine is to add to the power of a battle fleet in its home waters, and to impose limitations on a belligerent operating at a long distance from his territorial bases and resources. In other words, the effective transference of sea power to a great distance in order to bring it to bear on a strong naval belligerent is far more difficult than it was in the past and in circumstances easily imagined might be impossible. This conclusion must, however, be modified when the Power operating from a distance has a strong ally possessing ports and resources adjacent to the territorial waters of its

opponent. Thus, in the Great War, the American naval forces acting in the North Sea and East Atlantic gained this advantage, which was fully reaped because of the rare spirit of co-operation and mutual understanding which animated our two Navies. Similarly the Allied Powers had command of many ports in the Mediterranean where Japanese destroyers could be effectively employed.

When the territories of naval belligerents are not far apart, conditions resembling those in the North Sea will again rise. Such conditions would exist in a war between Japan and China, assuming the latter to have re-created a fleet, or between two adjacent South American Republics. In European waters, pending a period of national reconstruction, a great naval war need not be contemplated. Austria as a Naval Power has vanished. France and Italy could have no motive for competitive warship building, which inexorable economic stringency would in any case forbid. It is impossible for us to base our standard of naval force upon any probable European contingency. No one would dare to assume that Germany and Russia may not again be in a position to become strong Naval Powers ; but that cannot happen for many years, and the wrecking of Russia by her Bolshevik rulers has been so complete that half a century would be a moderate estimate of the time needed for her full recuperation. She will have to breed millions of men to replace those massacred or starved, and to rebuild the educated classes specially selected for destruction. German exploitation, however strenuous, must be a slow process.

Of all Great Powers, Britain has by far the greatest facilities for employing naval force in distant ports. Such a harbour as that of Sydney, with its narrow though shallow entrance, is almost unique in the accommodation it offers, and there are other fine ports in Australia, little known, but long distances apart. Singapore occupies an important strategic position flanking the sea route between

Australia and Japan. In many parts of the world there are numerous minor ports available as temporary fuelling bases, and as shelters for submarines and light craft. For the naval defence of territories so provided this is a great advantage, which, however, accrues to any naval belligerent attacked by a Power whose bases are far distant, and especially if that Power is forced to employ a battle fleet. In laying down the standard of British naval strength in capital ships, therefore, the criterion is not necessarily the number of such ships possessed by any other Power, but that which it would be possible to employ in such contingencies as it is reasonable to provide against. To proclaim a one-Power standard, as the Admiralty has done, can only mean that our battleship force must be of any strength which may commend itself to American opinion. This would be an indefensible policy, certain to be eventually discarded, and perhaps leading to a reaction which might imperil our national safety. It is worse than useless to build ships which could not be employed.

There are two considerations which can enable us to find a sound basis for our standard of naval strength :

1. The strength necessary to deal with action which we should be impelled by the dictates of national safety or bound in honour to oppose.

2. The strength which any Naval Power that can be reasonably regarded as a probable enemy could bring to bear upon any territorial portion of the Empire or upon Imperial commerce at sea.

The time element—the period required to make additions to naval force exceeding those now in progress—must be duly regarded. Fortunately the number of problems thus arising is limited in present circumstances, and, as the greater includes the less, the standard required for major operations will amply suffice for the minor tasks which may fall upon the Navy.

Instead of seeking for formulæ necessarily misleading, it is most desirable that the Naval General Staff, which is at length being properly organized, should work out estimates on the lines I suggest. One result might well be modifications of the existing types of battleship, while the various elements which now make up sea-power would receive full consideration by being adjusted to fulfil definite purposes studied in advance.

I do not for a moment ignore the possibilities of a purely air attack, or the fact that the means of carrying out such an attack can be provided in a far shorter time than that required for ship-building; but an air attack from the home territory of one belligerent upon that of another must be met in the air, and I have confined myself to certain aspects of the naval warfare of the future.

British sea-power will always depend upon adequate and suitable *matériel*, effective direction in war, and, perhaps most important of all, the qualities of our seamen of all ranks, including the mercantile marine. There have been periods in our history when the first condition was not fulfilled at the outset of hostilities. The second was not entirely fulfilled during the Great War for reasons which I cannot here discuss. The third never shone more brilliantly than when we triumphed over forces far greater than those which Napoleon wielded. The future security of the Empire demands that we should turn to the fullest account all the many and varied lessons of the war before they are either blurred or forgotten.

**PART II**  
**INDIA**





## XXI

### INDIAN NATIONALISM

(“*The Times*,” 22 and 23 December, 1913.)

This is composed of two out of four long articles which *The Times*—then not committed to any policy—permitted me to contribute. They were intended to convey my fresh impressions, on returning to England, of a complex situation and to explain the falsity of the claims of the Indian Nationalists which seemed to appeal to convinced democrats in this country lacking all knowledge of the basic conditions of the Indian peoples. My object was to give an early warning that India was still wholly unfit for democratic institutions, and that concessions to the clamour of a small and privileged class could only shake the foundations of order and prejudice the greatest interests of the masses, the responsibility for whose welfare we could neither surrender nor devolve upon an Indian oligarchy. Five years later these and other plain warnings were thrown to the winds ; but all who have sought to follow events since Mr. Montagu’s disastrous policy came into force, will surely realize that my words, inspired by deep affection for India and her peoples, have proved true to the letter.

IN his admirable study of *Indian Unrest* Sir Valentine Chirol carefully examined the influence of Brahmanism, which he regards as one of the “only two forces that aspire to substitute themselves for British rule, or at least to make the continuance of that rule subservient to their own ascendancy.” The other force he defines as that “generated by Western education, which operates to some extent over the whole of India, but only upon an infinitesimal fraction of the population recruited among a few privileged castes.” Neither of these forces had, in his opinion, “in itself sufficient substance to be dangerous” ;

but he clearly saw that "the most rebellious elements in both have effected a temporary and unnatural alliance on the basis of an illusory 'Nationalism' which appeals to nothing in Indian history, but is calculated and meant to appeal with dangerous force to Western sentiment and ignorance."

This diagnosis of the situation a few years ago was profoundly true, but recent developments indicate the need of some qualification. The "temporary and unnatural alliance" has been strengthened for evil, and other than "the most rebellious elements" are, consciously or unconsciously, playing a part in the alienation of the masses. Between the Western thought imperfectly assimilated in the schools and colleges of India and Brahmanism there may appear to be an almost impassable intellectual gulf, but the imported "Nationalist" theories have been absorbed by Brahmans whose ambitions blind them to the hopeless incongruity of ideals and who are quick to see the political uses of religions in which they may have ceased to believe. And so-called Hindu "Moderates," or Mohammedans, when they engage in a movement for the establishment of what is described as "self-government" in India, cannot be expected to exercise a nice discrimination as to methods. In India we have to recognize the fact that apparently antagonistic elements can unite in swelling the propaganda directed against British rule, and whether perpetual misrepresentations or incitements to active hostility suit the predilections of individuals, the effect upon the vast unthinking masses is to instil dislike differing only in degree. Such "temporary and unnatural" alliances may continue effective until irreparable injury has been inflicted upon India, and their existence can be represented as a proof of the catholicity and the solidarity of the "national" spirit.

It is perhaps inevitable that the growth of this spirit should be welcomed and encouraged by well-meaning

persons at home who fail to understand its relation to the helpless millions absolutely dependent upon British rule to save them from anarchy. The Nationalist idea is a by-product of a shallow education in which the merits of democratic institutions resulting from centuries of political evolution were casually imbibed without the counterpoise of knowledge. The uprising and the naval and military triumphs of Japan suggested nebulous possibilities of pan-Asiatic dominion. The paper Constitutions nominally adopted in Persia and China stimulated vague notions of self-government. It was discovered—not in the pages of history—that India had a golden past in which all other nations learned at her feet and her peoples were immune from all the ills of modern existence. This and more could be regained if the “demon” of British rule were driven out.

The political uses which this theory can be made to serve are manifold. It may well appeal to the nobler instincts of the Indian peoples. It ought so to appeal—if it bore the least resemblance to truth. In the painful story of *Siri Ram, Revolutionist*—the saddest and the truest picture of some aspects of the Nationalist propaganda that has yet been painted—the Swami skilfully plays upon the imagination of the young Indian student :

“A dragon is sucking the life-blood of our Bharat Mata. She is weeping. Shall we sit at our meals amid laughter and merry-making without care? Or shall we not rather give up our pleasures and smear our bodies with ashes every day until we have rescued her and trampled the demon under our foot? . . . Our country was the crown of all countries and was called the Golden Land. Her hour has come again. Drums are beating. Heroes and martyrs are preceding. See to Sivaji, Napoleon Buonaparte, and other heroes of Germany and France. See to Japan. Take only a life for a life.”

This is no invented harangue. It is simply a paraphrase of the teaching which is being daily distilled into the impressionable youth of India, and the Nationalist sympathizers at home are assisting the process.

Who are the teachers and where lies the strength of the movement which threatens the peace of India? Among the 1,670,000 persons classed as "literate in English" there are men of whom any country might be proud—real Indian philanthropists and patriots, students of affairs, captains of commerce and industry, some scholars, true reformers, loyal friends willing to help the Government with disinterested advice and perfectly cognizant of the fact that on the stability of British rule every hope for the future of India absolutely depends. Such men fear and deplore the tendencies which they plainly see; but their numbers do not increase, and they are sensitive to the attacks to which they are subjected. Their influence is diminishing in India and is not felt in England, where determined efforts are made to capture public opinion for Nationalist purposes. The large number of students in colleges and secondary schools who may be classed as *litterati* for Census objects have too often been used for political purposes, but they can hardly be regarded as politicians fit to lead or to represent opinion. There are more than 365,000 Christian literates in English. Probably not more than 500,000 adults remain, and these would include many thousands of persons who have failed in their examinations, who are not educated in any real sense, and who cherish grievances against the Government, which they regard as the cause of their want of success. Lastly, there are large numbers of Indian Government servants who are true to their salt. All such estimates must be conjectural; but the adult classes who constitute the plastic "material" upon which, as Sir Valentine Chirol has pointed out, "the leaders of unrest have most successfully worked" cannot greatly exceed

300,000, and may be less in number, out of a population of 315 millions.

As will be seen from the figures already given, the literates in English tend to increase in a higher ratio than the general literates, many of whom are barely able to read and write a vernacular language. The *literati* have picked up the shibboleths of democracy, and some of them can glibly use its formulæ, but of the existence of any real democratic spirit it is difficult to find a trace among them. A body less representative of India cannot be imagined. India remains and will remain for many generations an essentially aristocratic country in a sense of which the British people at home and in the Dominions have long lost the knowledge. Some of our mistakes in India have been due to our lack of this knowledge, and for want of it we may and do at times unconsciously offend the deep-rooted feelings of an ancient people. Were we to abdicate in favour of the "Nationalists" there would be no materials from which to form and no democrats to administer a democracy. The success of the present political movement would entail an attempt to govern by the narrowest of oligarchies, which, external aggression apart, would instantly crumble to pieces. Such a Government, were it conceivable, would violate every principle cherished by the politicians at home who are giving support to the growing disaffection, and would violently conflict with the inherited traditions of old India. When the Indian Nationalist speaks attractively of "representative" institutions, it is necessary to remember that he is thinking in terms of a handful of persons whose interests often conflict with those of the millions of India, and who show no real sympathy with their needs. He contemplates the attainment of power for himself and his class, and any addition of Indians in the higher posts of the Administration which the Public Services Commission may recommend cannot have the smallest tranquillizing

effect. It would provide only for a pitiful fraction of the literate malcontents, leaving all the rest unbenefited. Like the generous and important reforms of 1909, it would utterly fail to satisfy the aspirations fomented and proclaimed.

Unfortunately for India, circumstances which the Government could not control have powerfully assisted the Nationalist movement. The Tripoli and Balkan wars naturally produce excitement among the Moslems of India. There were sober and loyal Mohammedans who strove to restrain it; but the Nationalists duly exploited the alleged impotence and ill-will of the British Government in the interests of *swaraj*, and the Moslem extremists, to the temporary satisfaction of their astute Hindu allies, have risen to power in the councils of the community. The consequences appeared at Cawnpore where a question which had excited no local interest was, suddenly and by outside influences, made the occasion of an outbreak of fanaticism. The usual deplorable results followed, and the incendiaries on whom the whole responsibility rests escaped scot-free. The settlement would be Gilbertian but for the preceding tragedy, since the sanctity of the *dalan*, which had formed the sole justification of the riot, was readily abandoned.

The grievances of the Indians in South Africa, which most naturally and rightly appeal to all classes and religions, are an even greater source of danger. The matter is infinitely complicated and entangled with Union politics and with the relations which must exist between the Home Government and the Dominions. The facts that the British people in South Africa support the reasonable demands of the Indians, that the Indian Governments are in fullest sympathy with those demands, that Englishmen freely subscribe to the funds which are being raised to help sufferers, that the obnoxious £3 licence tax is doomed even if it is not proved illegal, as an English lawyer main-

tains, and that methods of administration—easily changed—are as much responsible for the hardships complained of as legislation, cannot be made clear to the sensitive masses of India. It is distressing to note that inflammatory reports were at once spread over India, and strong language was instantly forthcoming without waiting for ascertained facts. Whatever might be the result of an inquiry, harm which cannot be remedied has already been done, and the general result must be to strengthen the forces of disaffection.

Incidents of party strife at home, the preparations in Ulster, strikes which lead to violence, even the outrages of the suffragettes, can be turned to account for political purposes and can be used to supply points for the propaganda. Thus in India we can plainly see the creation of an atmosphere in which the best efforts of Government and the wonderful progress already achieved are viewed as in a distorting medium where all sense of proportion is lost and truth is effectually obscured.

Since the Nationalist Party began to aim, not at building up Indian nationhood but at supplanting British rule, the injury inflicted upon India has spread and deepened. The diversion of energy and funds from the cause of the real people of India has visibly checked the progress of social reforms which would have helped to uplift the masses and to instil the spirit of brotherhood. Signs of a real and a healthy awakening, due to Western influences, can be discerned. Some of the best and most patriotic of Indians are earnestly endeavouring to work on truly national lines, and several movements have been started in recent years to develop practical philanthropy, to stimulate self-help, and to undertake the many tasks to which Government agency is not suited. Such efforts are overshadowed and stunted by the perversion of ideals preached by the small body of lawyers, doctors, journalists, and schoolmasters who claim the leadership of



the classes which have acquired a superficial Western education and who are seeking, through these classes, to overthrow all authority in India. A train of misfortunes has naturally followed. Murder, crime, and general lawlessness increase in many places, and the loss of innocent lives in riots artificially fomented may well give rise to anxiety for the future. How many other rising storms have been quieted by the tact and the soothing influence of British officials is not guessed in England.

Even the recent bank failures, which have brought suffering to many poor people, are directly due to the propaganda. The *swadeshi* boycott movement, started in Bengal and endorsed by the Indian National Congress, naturally led to the establishment of fraudulent institutions, which made appeals to a spurious patriotism. As an Indian banker has recently pointed out, "company promoting became the hobby of all true patriotic Indians. Now, my good countrymen lost sight of the point that plans matured in such an atmosphere and such a temper were bound to be attended by grave dangers." There have been great bankers in India. The Seths of Clive's time must have possessed remarkable capacity. India to-day can boast of men who show sterling business aptitudes combined with untarnished integrity; but too many of the promoters of the *swadeshi* institutions which have lately collapsed with ruinous results can lay no claims to either. It is to be hoped that public investigations and such legislation as is possible for the protection of the people will follow; but the Nationalist movement in this aspect has already had the effect of setting back the investing habit, and we cannot be sure that some ignorant victims will not be induced to throw the blame on the Government.

Many other examples of the effects of political agitation in India might be adduced. Enough has been said to give some idea of a situation which is becoming more

and more distressing to all who love India and her warm-hearted peoples, who realize the sacred nature of our obligations towards them, and who are striving to promote the good will that is essential to the building up of Indian nationhood. A small section of the population is working, strenuously and successfully, to bring about the alienation of the vast unwieldy masses. That is "the Indian Peril," and if it is not understood in time there will be a rude awakening.

Let the conscientious democrat at home reflect upon the tumultuous forces latent in 315 millions of people wholly uneducated and inheriting, in part at least, strong fighting instincts, split not only vertically into discordant elements deeply permeated by traditional enmity but horizontally into thousands of castes, and quickly roused to violent fanaticism. Let him ask himself what power is to preserve this stupendous mob from blood-stained anarchy if British rule is weakened or removed. Let him consider who is to hold back the armed warrior tribes of the North-West Frontier with Afghan hordes behind them, the Nepalese on the north, the Chinese on the north-east, from the rich plains and cities of India. Let him admit that the peace and order in India which he may have seen or read of are the direct results of British rule with the forces behind it, and that if these forces fail the reaction will be catastrophic. Let him realize that, if that day comes, the *literati* whose familiarity with the phrases of democracy attracts his sympathy will be instantly submerged, and the elemental instincts of the untutored millions will ruthlessly assert themselves until some other Western Power restores order by the sword. Then perhaps he may come to doubt whether the so-called Nationalist agitation merits his encouragement.

Out of the grave perplexities and complexities of the situation in India some few general principles plainly stand forth as guides to policy. The welfare of the

millions of helpless and inarticulate people, not the momentary gratification of a handful of literates, must be the first object, as its furtherance is the first duty, of Government. If they are allowed to be alienated, India will become ungovernable, and nothing is so certain as that any visible weakening of the British Raj will bring about alienation on a large scale. In the East the masses instinctively follow what they believe to be the rising star and quickly abandon what may seem to be a losing cause. Something of this nature seems to be occurring in Bengal, where the number of British officials is utterly inadequate. We must gradually educate these millions, remembering that the vast majority of them will always remain cultivators and seeking to fit them for the tasks of their lives. We should also endeavour to build up the village community, where this is possible, and thus to inculcate citizenship.

Our Government must concern itself less with politics and more with economics. There is ample scope for work which will benefit and uplift the toiling millions, but will never be pressed and may be strongly opposed by the lawyer-politicians who pose as friends of the people. We must show inflexible justice in dealing with conflicting interests, never forgetting that the Government is the only force under which nationhood can grow up out of the jarring elements of India. It is necessary to reverse the old Latin adage and unite to govern. In proportion to our success in uniting the Government with the governed and in securing co-operation between all classes will be the progress of India towards self-government in the distant future. We must unflinchingly enforce law and order, realizing that misplaced leniency may be cruel in the long run by encouraging outbreaks in the suppression of which the lives of harmless persons will inevitably be sacrificed. There are parts of India in which the primary duty of guarding life and property is not now adequately

discharged, and some Native States can show a higher standard of security than certain British districts.

Improvement of our educational system in the higher branches should be fearlessly undertaken in the truest interests of the people. Technical education needs to be built up, and the preposterous misuse of English literature, which the experienced author of *Siri Ram* has effectively exposed, requires to be eliminated. Other defects are patent, and their inevitable results have been frequently pointed out. No country stands in greater need of soundly educated men and women than India; but, for various reasons, the products of the universities are deplorably inadequate to the growing requirements. The judicial system urgently needs to be overhauled. Established with the best of intentions, it operates in certain respects with real hardship upon a naturally litigious people easily exploited by the superfluity of pleaders, and it too often fails to secure justice. "Inexplicable acquittals," wrote our most acute foreign critic, "encourage crime and ruin the prestige of the dominant race."

If, as is now the case, a small band of political malcontents has come to wield an influence which threatens to alienate the toiling millions from our rule, there are elements sincerely loyal by conviction, by personal affinities, or by knowledge. Reverence and affection for the Sovereign are deeply engrained in the mind of the peoples of India. This strong sentiment, the inheritance of many centuries, is a power for good which the agitators are seeking to undermine. The Princes and Chiefs, who have already been threatened by the propagandists, realize the dangers of a "Vakil Raj," and they would not for a moment tolerate in their States an agitation directed against themselves. The fine old gentry of India wonder whether the flowing tide is with the Government, and what will be their position if it is not. The native officers are beginning to ask whether the Sircar is afraid, and it is

most undesirable that an Asiatic army should think it scents fear in its rulers. Indians trained in practical business perfectly understand the basis of British credit upon which the whole increasing structure of Indian commerce and industry rests. The Government in normal times cannot depend upon all these elements for active support; but it can show regard for its friends, seek their counsels, and avoid arousing their distrust by making concessions to agitation—concessions which can never lead to the least political advantage and will invariably be taken as the starting-point for fresh demands.

Strange as it may seem to some minds at home, it is strength in Government which alone attracts support in the East. And Government can be more educative by frankly explaining its objects and issuing authoritative statements of facts which could not be entirely ignored. Party organs have at least the advantage that both sides of a question or of a policy may be presented; but in India there is no effective antidote to the streams of misrepresentation and detraction which now find their way even to the simple villagers, who can be as easily reached by the administrative machinery. Firm administration of the Press laws is essential in the truest interests of the masses, who are the real sufferers from incendiary publications, as experience has sadly proved. These laws cannot absolutely prevent incendiary writing artfully veiled; but they can mitigate the danger and help to raise the standard of journalism. It is the bounden duty of every Briton in India to give out sympathy unstinted when it is deserved; but he must never flinch from frankly condemning what is unworthy and reactionary. That is the true way to show real friendship to India and to build up the best qualities of her peoples.

If, however, the Government and its officials adopted every measure best calculated to avert the coming danger, influences emanating from England might go far to thwart

their aims. Can it be too much to ask that politicians and publicists at home shall take reasonable care to ascertain the truth, and shall assume that Britons in India have as keen a sense of justice and of duty and as much sympathy as are given to Britons elsewhere? And may they not seriously consider whether the aspirations which they encourage really represent a burning zeal to make "the bounds of freedom wider yet," or a growing desire for power to be wielded by a small section of malcontents who have imperfectly assimilated some Western ideas? The great question to be resolved is: Can a democracy govern a vast Eastern Empire? Upon the answer, which must be forthcoming within a few years, the ruin or the sustained and quickened progress of India depends.

## XXII

### THE MONTAGU-CHELMSFORD REPORT

*(The speech republished below was delivered in the House of Lords on 6th August, 1918, in support of a Motion of mine, drawing attention to the Report of the Viceroy (Lord Chelmsford) and the Secretary of State for India (the late Mr. Edwin Montagu) on Indian Reforms, and moving for the production of Papers giving the opinions of Local Governments on the question of reforms, of a selection of Addresses to the Viceroy and Secretary of State, giving both sides of opinion on that question, and of the Report of Mr. Justice Rowlatt's Committee on Sedition in India.)*

This speech was the first in which it was attempted to analyse the proposals of the amazing Report to which the India Office and the Government of India were committed after Mr. Montagu's trip to India in the cold weather of 1917-18. I tried to explain the preposterous device of dyarchy which, as such, has proved unworkable; but my main object was to point out that the interests of the masses of India whose "contentment" Mr. Montagu proposed "deliberately" to disturb were ignored. In the draft Bill which followed, some features in the Report did not appear; but the general effect of this Bill was dangerously to weaken British authority in India and to put nothing in its place. The Bill, as it emerged from the Joint Select Committee, went further than the draft in crippling the Supreme Government. More than nine years have passed since this speech was delivered, and I believe that it will be admitted that my forecasts have been abundantly justified by events. Many stalwart supporters of the Montagu-Chelmsford policy seem now to have abandoned their theories and to be filled with misgivings.

MY LORDS,—I believe that there are many of your Lordships who feel, now that a remarkable Report has been issued for public discussion, that if this Report is not considered in your Lordships' House it might seem as if the vital interests of the Indian people were not being

regarded. In the second place, there has been an attempt on a considerable scale, which began even before the Report was issued, to create what is generally called an "atmosphere" favourable to the Report. That, I think, makes it all the more necessary that some discussion should take place before the recess. I venture to think that the handling of the questions of Indian reform have been somewhat irregular and generally unfortunate. It bears a close resemblance to the handling of the Irish question, and it is leading, I believe, to curiously similar results.

On 20th August last the Secretary of State made an important declaration with which I do not for a moment quarrel, but I should like to point that the aims which he then announced are not really new. I believe that every one who has had the honour of holding office in India has always thought that it was his first duty to do everything in his power to advance Indian nationhood in order that self-government could come as soon as that nationhood existed. I know that this was my first object during my five and a half years in India. I paid special interest to all questions of education and to all Indian enterprises during my time. But it was most unfortunate that before the Secretary of State assumed office he had made some caustic and not very well-informed criticisms of our rule in India, and the result was that his official declaration was, quite naturally, coupled with his unofficial previous utterances, and this aroused most exaggerated expectations throughout India.

Again, I cannot help thinking that the visit of the Secretary of State to India at a time when this country was fighting for its life was a real misfortune. It had the effect of stimulating a very dangerous agitation throughout India, and incidentally it also had the effect of lowering the high office of Viceroy in the eyes of the Indian politicians. And lastly, my Lords, I cannot help regarding the manner of the presentation of this Report as being



somewhat irregular. In the past the Government of India drew up schemes of reform; they were discussed by the Secretary of State and his Council; they were then considered by the Cabinet, and were finally submitted to the judgment of Parliament. Instead, in this case, the Viceroy and the Secretary of State have signed one of the most controversial documents ever issued, and then the public is asked to discuss it. Imagine the First Lord of the Admiralty putting forward a most elaborate naval programme over his signature for public discussion and a member of the Board of Admiralty getting up publicly to express his approval of it, and all that being done before the Board of Admiralty or the Cabinet had had an opportunity of officially considering it. I cannot help thinking that the procedure was distinctly irregular.

My Lords, I warmly welcome some parts of this Report. The reconstruction of the India Office, I believe, has been long overdue. That is now, we are told, to be done by a Committee. The Provinces of India are to have in future charge of their own domestic affairs. That was the main feature in the Delhi Durbar Despatch of 1911. The immediate effect will be to give much greater influence to Indian opinion on all Provincial Councils, which I believe to be a very good step. The future effect of that measure will be to give a kind of Federal form to the Government of India which I think is essential to ultimate self-government. That is to be arranged by another Committee. Beyond that, the extension of Indian influence in the sphere of self-government is, I believe, a wise and necessary measure which might have been taken some time ago. The rearrangement of electorates under the Morley-Minto scheme, and the reconsideration of the franchise in certain cases, are also most necessary steps which should be taken. But that is to be arranged by a Committee which is to tour India under a chairman who knows nothing of the country. The process must take

several months, and it must lead to further controversy of a bitter kind throughout India. I cannot think that that process is necessary. I believe that the Government of India and the Local Governments can perfectly well prepare schemes under some general instructions, and there is ample knowledge here to enable those schemes to be reviewed when they come home.

Now I turn to the Report, which reflects the greatest credit on its draftsmen, but is in parts exceedingly difficult reading, and I am afraid that few people in these very strenuous times will be able to master some of its intricacies. That, I think, is one of its dangers. It comes to us without any *pièces justificatives*. We are not told the opinion of the Local Governments, though those Local Governments are to be turned upside down. The Report ignores the great volume of non-Brahman and non-lawyer opinion expressed often most passionately by politicians in memorials or in resolutions passed in public meetings. I will quote only three of those protests out of a very large number. The Namasudras of Bengal, who are an important lower class of the working classes, numbering, I think, something like 10,000,000 men, passed this resolution in a conference at Calcutta :

“ This conference emphatically protests against the gross misrepresentations of facts that are being made by some so-called high-caste leaders in the self-conceived character of representatives with regard to the real wishes of the people about Home Rule or self-government.”

My Lords, I think that that protest has been justified. The South Indian Islamic League, in an address to the Secretary of State, say :

“ Nothing should be done which will weaken British authority in any manner whatsoever, and hand over the destinies of the Moslem community to a class which has

no regard for their interests and no respect for their sentiments.”

Lastly, the Madras Dravidian Hindu Association, which represents classes that are now giving almost the whole of the recruits which have been provided from the Madras Presidency, in an address to the Viceroy and the Secretary of State, say this :

“ We shall fight, to the last drop of our blood, any attempt to transfer the seat of authority in this country from British hands to so-called high-caste Hindus, who have ill-treated us in the past and will do so again but for the protection of British laws.”

I earnestly hope that your Lordships will read the little selection of these protests which have been published by the Indo-British Association, and which I think have been sent to your Lordships. Considering the little time there was for organization, the Home Rule movement was well supported by funds from well-known sources and it exercised intimidation on a large scale. I feel that these protests and warnings deserve consideration, and must be regarded by us all as most significant.

Surely the Report might have devoted one paragraph to the opinions of the working-classes in India, who, after all, represent the real mass of the people. The authors of the Report base their proposals “ on the faith that is in us.” My Lords, it is a faith which will certainly be called upon to remove mountains of difficulty and of danger. We are told that they “ discovered infallible signs that indicate the growth of character.” They do not say in what period that “ growth of character ” has occurred. Has it been in the past century or during the war, or during the visit of the Secretary of State ? That is one of the few touches of humour in an otherwise grave State Paper. The Viceroy had been about a year and a half in India

when the Secretary of State arrived, and he must have been deeply engrossed in all the various affairs connected with the work of the war. The Secretary of State and his colleagues made a cold-weather tour through some of the great towns. Now, can it be believed that a tour of five or six of the European capitals would enable the tourists to declare that they saw "infallible signs of the growth of character" in Europe? And the peoples of India are much more diverse than the people of Europe. A Finn is much more like an Italian than a Pathan is like a Tamil!

It was necessary for the purposes of the Report to insist that the Morley-Minto reforms, which were barely nine years old, were totally inadequate, and quite out of date; but incidentally the Report shows that these reforms gave immense influence to Indian opinion. We are told that

"Whenever the Government has met with anything approaching solid opposition on the part of Indian Members, it has, except on matters touching the peace and security of the country, generally preferred to give way."

Could there be a more striking tribute to the efficacy of those reforms? But those reforms had two defects. Firstly, decentralization was not made at the same time, which, as I have said, would have immensely increased the influence of Indian opinion and the Provincial Councils; secondly, some of the electorates were far too small; and communal representation, which is the only possible means of giving any influence in affairs to the real working-classes in India, was accepted by Lord Morley and Lord Minto only in the case of Mohammedans. The most striking feature of this Report, as it appears to me, is that it seems mainly directed to finding means of placating the little Home Rule Party, and that it ignores the conditions of

India during the war, and also the interests of the great working-classes of the country.

The Report asks this vital question, What ratio of the people really ask for greater power? And it goes on to say, most justly, that this question cannot be answered with any degree of certainty. But it then proceeds to add :

“ There is a core of earnest men who believe sincerely and strive for political progress ; around them a ring of less educated people to whom a phrase or a sentiment appeals ; and an outside fringe of those who have been described as attracted by curiosity to this new thing, or who find diversions in attacking a big and very solemn Government as urchins might take a perilous joy at casting toy darts at an elephant.”

The President of the Home Rule League informed the Secretary of State that the membership of that League throughout all India numbered 52,000 persons. Now, if we assume that the earnest core, the ring, and the outside fringe of urchins, number altogether 250,000, that would be a most exaggerated estimate ; and of that 250,000 a large number would not be able to give the slightest account of what self-government or Home Rule meant. But if we accept that figure, it means that the 250,000 wish to rule the 244,000,000 people in British India. Is that “ democracy ” in any form ? If this “ core of earnest men ” includes the leaders of this movement, then some of its leaders have frankly stated quite openly that it is their object to destroy British rule altogether. Others tried to boycott recruiting for the Indian Defence Force ; others, again, at the Delhi Conference tried to bargain on the basis of “ No Home Rule, no man-power.” The Report says that the war has immeasurably accelerated the demand for Home Rule. That is perfectly true. The little band of Home Rulers saw their opportunity, and so also did the Germans, who have done all they could to

raise trouble for us in India. The war has also accelerated the Sinn Fein movement in Ireland—again with German assistance. It is very difficult for people in this country to follow events in India during the war. News is meagre, and the censorship is always energetic.

I will try briefly to indicate what has happened, because I think it should be widely known. German intrigues have been prevalent everywhere, and have been operating in many ways in different parts of India. The greatest conspiracy since the Mutiny was most happily discovered in time and ably handled by Sir Michael O'Dwyer, who has been publicly rebuked for speaking the truth. I am glad, however, to know that he had the loyal co-operation of the police in the Punjab and also of many of the people in the Punjab, who assisted him to get at the details of that conspiracy. The ramifications of that conspiracy included Vancouver, Japan, Berlin, and many other places. Several Indian regiments have shown mutinous symptoms, due to corruption by secret agents who have not been discovered. As you will remember, the outbreak at Singapore was particularly dangerous and serious. In Bengal anarchy and murder have prevailed for some time in many parts; and there is a dangerous revolutionary movement, supported by the educated classes, which Lord Ronaldshay in December last described in what I can only call very grave language. In October there occurred in Behar one of the most violent Hindu attacks on Mohammedans ever known in India; it was well organized in advance; it covered 1,000 square miles of territory, and it was accompanied by murder, outrage and robbery. Ultimately it was put down by British troops. That was at a time when Hindu politicians and members of the little Moslem League were discussing Home Rule schemes at Calcutta. Besides that, during this period of war there has been a most vicious outburst of slanders against British rule in the press of India, to which the Viceroy on one occasion

drew serious attention. There are some other symptoms than these which are not generally known in this country, as I feel sure that they ought to be known. The moral seems to me to be this—that, owing largely to weakness of government in India in recent years, the margin of safety is now very small. There never was a time when it was so necessary to scrutinize as carefully as possible any proposed changes in the system of our government in India.

I turn now to the details of the Report, which does not proceed, I think, on lines of evolution, but on lines of revolution. Speaking broadly, there are two ways by which a greater share of the Administration can be conferred upon Indians. The first I may call the geographical plan by which defined areas can be handed over to Indian rule, those areas being carefully increased until ultimately the whole Province falls under Indian rule in the future. Another plan is to allocate certain services to Indian Executives, and to go on increasing those services till all have been handed over.

The Report adopts the second plan, and, if your Lordships will bear with me, I will try to explain the result. Every Province is to have two Executives, which I will call A and B. Executive A is to consist of the Governor, one European, and one Indian, all appointed by the Crown. That is the present system, except that one European is taken away, which I think would be a great disadvantage to a Governor coming fresh from this country. That system has worked well in the past, and I believe will always work well, unless a permanent anti-Government majority is set up in the Legislative Council, which is exactly what the Home Rule Party is aiming at. Executive B is to consist of two, and eventually more, Ministers, selected by the Governor from the elected members of the Legislative Council, and responsible to the elected members of that body. It is wisely ordained that these

Ministers can only be removable by General Election ; otherwise the changes in those offices would, I think, be very frequent. Two advisers may be added without portfolio, with no *status*, no special salary, no authority, and no vote.

Executive A has control of the reserved services. Executive B controls all the transferred services, which are to be settled by another Committee, and the transferred services are to be increased until Executive A has disappeared altogether. When this remarkable Cabinet meets there will be three bodies, each serving in totally different capacities, with the Governor as the sole link between them. Executive A cannot deal with transferred services ; B cannot deal with the reserved services ; but A is wholly responsible for the maintenance of order, and B has no responsibility whatever of that kind. The advisers can speak in the Cabinet if asked, and if they choose, but have no powers of any kind. I think it is a menagerie and not a Cabinet. The Report says the decisions of the " Ministers " will be subject to the Governor's advice and control. He may advise, but it will be quite impossible for him to control Ministers who depend upon elected majorities ; and all of your Lordships who have served in the Dominions as well as in India know that such a proposition is out of the question.

Legislative Councils are to have a " substantial " elected majority, and certain of their official members may speak and not vote. Bills will apparently be in two categories, differently handled. If Executive B introduces a Bill dealing with transferred services and it is passed by the Council, then it may remain subject to the veto of the Governor, the Governor-General, and of the Secretary of State ; but in some circumstances it might be difficult to exercise the power of veto. But if Executive A brings in a Bill which is opposed, as it frequently would be, by an elected majority in the Legislative Council, the Governor



may certify that it is essential to the discharge of his responsibility. The majority of the Council can then appeal to the Governor-General in Council, who is to decide "whether the certified Bill deals with a reserved subject." If the Governor-General in Council supports the certificate, then he, and probably the Governor, will be subject to violent attacks, but if the Governor's deliberate judgment in a matter on which he must know better than the Governor-General, is upset, I really think the position of the Governor will become impossible.

If the Government of India support the certificate, then the procedure is as follows. The Bill is discussed by the Legislative Council, and referred to an elected Grand Committee, consisting of 40 to 50 per cent. of the Council "reproducing as nearly as possible the various elements in the larger body." That condition will be exceedingly difficult to fulfil by any form of election which I can conceive. The Governor is permitted to nominate a bare majority on that Committee, which presumably will be a majority of one. The Grand Committee, after discussing the Bill, may refer it to a Select Committee. After being discussed by the Select Committee the Bill returns at once to the Grand Committee for further debate, and is reported back to the Legislative Council as a whole, and they may debate it again, subject to a time limit which the Governor may prescribe. The Bill then passes automatically, but the elected majority may send up their objections and may possibly succeed in stopping the ultimate sanction of the Bill. It is difficult to conceive anything more complicated, cumbrous, and unsuited to Indian conditions. It must have the effect of destroying all appearance of authority of every Provincial Government. It would put a premium on intrigue, in which, as we all know, the Eastern genius excels.

Two most serious results must follow directly from this amazing system. In the first place, proceedings taken by

Executive B might quite conceivably give rise to trouble ; but whatever B may do, A must support B, by force of arms if necessary. This little difficulty is recognized by Mr. Curtis, the inventor of the "dyarchy" which the Report has adopted. He says quite frankly that we may have to look on while helpless people are being injured by their own electorates. That is what I think we can never do while we remain in India ; and it is exactly what is expected by some of the memorialists, of whose warnings the Report takes no account. I think every one who has served in India knows that it is one of the pre-occupations of British officials to prevent Indians from oppressing Indians, and the paucity of British officials in some departments is so marked that we all sadly know that this oppression goes on without our being able to stop it.

The second serious objection is that services, whether reserved or transferred, must continue to be administered by district officers and commissioners, who, therefore, will have to serve two masters—one subject to the control of the Governor and ultimately of Parliament—and the other practically uncontrolled, except by the elected majority in the Legislative Council. This must give rise to acute irritation and difficulty, and taken in conjunction with some of the other proposals in the Report, will have the effect of destroying the present high standard of the Indian Civil Service. No wise man will go to India under the proposed conditions, and if the Indian Civil Service deteriorates I do not see what we have left to keep our hold upon the affections and respect of the masses of India.

Policy will always depend largely upon finance, and every Budget must be a source of acute controversy between Executive A and Executive B. The "Ministers" will naturally clamour for money for the transferred services. The Executive Council may want it for the

reserved services, and for the maintenance of law and order. Executive A is certain to be defeated in the Legislative Council. The Governor may certify necessity, and then he is sure to be attacked by the majority of the Council and by all the organs which they control. I really believe the position of the Governor in these circumstances will become quite intolerable, and, as after a period of years a roving Commission is to go out to examine into everything and see if he has done his duty, I am convinced that no man who understands the situation and cherishes any self-respect could accept the office of Governor.

I will now turn to the Supreme Government. At present the Viceroy's Council has a Government majority, which Lord Morley rightly thought was absolutely essential. That is all changed, and two Chambers are now to be set up. The Upper Chamber, or Council of State, is to consist of twenty-one elected and twenty-nine nominated members, of whom four must be non-officials. The Lower Chamber, or Legislative Assembly, is to consist of about 100 members, of whom two-thirds are to be elected, and of the remaining one-third not less than one-third must be non-official.

Government measures are ordinarily to be introduced in the Lower Chamber and passed on to the Upper House. If the Houses disagree, as they frequently will, then unless the Governor-General certifies the necessity of the Amendment of the Upper House and considers it essential for the discharge of his responsibilities, the two Houses sit together, which might have the effect of defeating the Government of India. If leave to introduce a Bill is refused by the Lower House, or if the Bill is rejected by the Lower House, then the Governor-General may certify it and send it to the other House which must pass it and report it only to the Lower House. This seems to me to be government by certification and veto. I cannot conceive any government more likely to be unpopular than that form

of government in India or any other place. The general effect of this very complicated scheme must be long delays of public business, frequent conflicts between the two Houses, and, I believe, a weakening of the high position of the Viceroy.

Here, again, there are enormous opportunities opened out to political intrigue. The general effect of the adoption of this Report would, in my opinion, be to weaken the authority of the British Government all over India at a time when that authority is more than ever needed. Dual authority will be established in all the Provinces and will permeate down to quite humble officials. The Government will only in part be British any longer, and there will be an Indian majority in every Provincial Cabinet. Every one who knows the powerful forces of reaction which are latent in India will understand that we should risk a most serious setback to civilization and progress. I really believe that, if these proposals were adopted as they stand, the result would be to postpone the ultimate self-government which we all desire as soon as there is an Indian nation to which we can hand over our responsibilities. Your Lordships will see that these proposals introduce a new principle into India, and it is a principle which Lord Morley said he would never accept. That principle is the transference of executive power to Ministers responsible to elected Members, themselves responsible to electorates which, in the Western sense, cannot exist for some years. That principle is absolutely opposed to the traditions, customs, and inherited characteristics of the Indian peoples. There never was such a case of putting heady new wine into very ancient bottles. There is not a Chief in India who, as I said the other day, would not die rather than accept that principle in the ruling of his State, and we must remember that the Chiefs govern one-third of the area of India and one-quarter of its population.

Have we any right to force upon India a form of demo-

cracy which the greatest democracy in the world would not tolerate for a moment? It was the main object of the founders of the United States to get rid of this form. Is it certain that this form of government will for ever endure with us? Has it really shown to advantage either in peace or in war? May I quote the words of an English non-official resident in India who knows the country and its people well. He writes :

“I do not much heed the outcry from the small minority of iconoclasts and speculative jerry-builders. I listen rather for a voice that cannot yet be heard, the voice of the peoples of India. Can we guess now what they will say when the gift of political speech is theirs? Positively, we cannot say; negatively, we may be confident that it will not be for any self-governing system of the West that they will clamour. For the India of that far-off day will wish its institutions to conform to the genius of the Indian peoples, not to the borrowed notions of a denationalized intelligentsia, denationalized, alas! by the errors of British policy in the past.”

I believe those words express a profound truth, which was borne in upon me during my stay in India.

The main fault which I find with the Report is that it wholly ignores the genius of the Indian peoples and is mainly concerned with concessions to a denationalized intelligentsia. These proposals will not placate the little class of Brahmans and lawyers who have raised a ferment in British India, and British India only, during the war. The political leaders are already vehemently protesting against these proposals. Mr. Tilak said of this reform scheme :

“It is entirely unacceptable and will not satisfy anybody. It is only a miserable cheese-paring measure proposed in the interests of the bureaucracy, whose vested interests must always remain adverse to our aspirations. We

must now take our case to England and appeal to the British democracy."

Appeal to the British democracy to establish the narrowest oligarchy in the world! It was my painful duty in 1908 to order the arrest and trial of Mr. Tilak for articles in which it was plainly represented that the bomb, then newly introduced into India, was a charm calculated to work for the benefit of the people. The miserable assassin of Mr. Jackson, a most valuable Indian Civil Servant who was beloved by the Indians who knew him, stated at his trial :

"I read of many instances of oppression in the *Kesari*, the *Kal* and the *Kashtrammat*. I think that by killing sahibs we people can get justice. I never got injustice myself, nor did any one I know. I now regret killing Mr. Jackson. I killed a good man causelessly."

Could there be a greater tragedy than is expressed in those few words? Those three papers were all conducted by Mr. Tilak, who now proposes to come home to appeal to the British democracy.

While the principal leaders of what the Report calls the "earnest core" will not accept these reforms, they will be abhorrent to the gallant soldiers who have fought and suffered for the Empire during this war, if they ever come to understand them. Yet it is on the achievements of these fighting men that the politicians base their claims to rule them. The intelligentsia could not rule the fighting classes of India for a week. I firmly believe that the effect of these proposals, if they are adopted as they stand, would be first to lead to administrative, and then to political, chaos. And may I quote the words of Zemindar Telaprole to a large gathering of the non-Brahmans of Southern India. These are significant words :

“ Britain must understand that we are not cattle to be sold by one master to the other, with the further humiliation of having the first master standing by with a bludgeon in case we object to be sold.”

That is exactly the view which is taken by some of the memorialists who are ignored in this Report, and I believe it expresses the opinions of tens of millions of people in India who would not understand one word of this Report and would strongly object to be handed over to the tender mercies of their hereditary oppressors.

The Report contains some most admirable sentiments which may divert attention from some of the dangers that I have tried to point out. We are told that the first duty of every party in the State is to unteach partisanship. Have we learned that great truth ourselves? Excellent advice is given in the Report to every class in India. The pity is that it will never reach them. The Report says :

“ We can at least appeal to Hindu and Moslem, Brahman and non-Brahman, to cultivate a community of interests in the greatest welfare of the whole.”

The authors cannot have realized the chasm which at present separates Hindus and Moslems, Brahmans and non-Brahmans, a chasm which was formed hundreds of years ago, which is still deep, and which it will take years to bridge over. The authors of the Report believe that representative institutions will help to soften the rigidity of the caste system, and that is a system which dates back thousands of years. It is a system which has actually been intensified in our own day. Then they believe what to my mind is still more extraordinary. They believe that in “ deliberately disturbing the placid, pathetic contentment of the masses ” they are working for the highest good of India. It has not hitherto been regarded as the duty of the Viceroy and Secretary of State to disturb the

content of India. The catastrophic possibilities of discontent among 315,000,000 of people do not seem to have occurred to the authors of this Report.

Russia is now giving a most appalling object lesson of the results of the breaking up of centralized authority in a country where there are at least 80 per cent. illiterates. The effect of the weakening, or destruction, of British rule in India must be more disastrous, because there the antagonisms, social, religious, and racial, are far deeper, and far more bitter and complex, than those which exist in Russia. It is only the paramount authority of British rule which now stands between the Indian people and the blood-stained welter which followed the collapse of the Mogul Empire. We have made mistakes in the past, but still there is nothing in history to compare with our gigantic work in maintaining order and promoting the prosperity of the people of India. The difference between Persia and India to-day is British rule; nothing else. Our work is not finished, and our heavy responsibility still remains. It is the greatest trust that has ever fallen upon any nation; we must fearlessly accept it, and do only what we think right and safe for the best interests of the Indian people. We desire to associate with us in the administration as many as possible of the best minds in India, and not only the little intelligentsia which is represented by a group of agitators.

We have still before us a great work in India in gradually educating the masses, and it is a work which we alone can control and direct. The noble Earl [Earl Curzon of Kedleston], who made a fine effort to rescue higher education work in India from the morass into which it had fallen, knows well how everything really depends on the direction which we give, and that if our influence and our power are taken away there will be an instant and a quick relapse. There are ways by which we can accomplish our great task, I believe, in safety, and there are alternative



proposals which I am prepared to make on geographical lines which, I believe, real Indian moderates would accept. Meanwhile, I hope the Government will refer this Report to some competent examining body which will be able to take and record evidence. I have given my reasons for believing that some of these proposals are dangerous and in doing so I have only one object in view, and that is the welfare of the masses in India. I have ventured to raise this question in your Lordships' House to-day, only because I cherish a real affection for India and her simple, kindly peoples.

## XXIII

# THE MONTAGU-CHELMSFORD REFORMS IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

(*"Empire Review," May, 1923.*)

The Government of India Act had been in operation more than four years, and I thought it desirable to examine the divergence between the theories accepted in 1918-19 and the practical results obtained in India. Since 1923, this divergence has become more marked and, at the present time, the outstanding features are communal civil war which has entailed a hecatomb of Indian victims and, as I predicted in 1918 and later, growing alarm for the future on the part of the Princes and Chiefs. Now that the Government of 320 millions of the human race is again to be thrown into the melting pot, I venture to think that this article, written in the interests of the vast masses to whom forms of government convey nothing, is worth consideration.

THE circumstances which led to the subjection of the sub-continent of India, with a population of about 320,000,000, to what Mr. Montagu describes as "a very dangerous experiment," are already forgotten. The clamour of a few individuals, steadily increasing in volume and violence, brought about an unexampled series of concessions culminating in the Government of India Act of 1919, which pleased no one except its authors, and is now creating a situation fraught with grave anxiety.

The year 1915 ended in bitter disappointment to the Allied Powers. The spring offensive on the western front had failed. The great joint attack in September in Champagne and on the Arras-La Bassée sector had entailed many losses with no adequate results, because it proved

impossible to dominate the German artillery. The Italian operations against the Trentino and in the Isonzo region yielded little gain after great sacrifices. In the East, the Russians had suffered severe reverses ; Bulgaria had joined the Central Powers, who thus gained free communication with Asia Minor, and one great Pan-German object was temporarily attained. The first submarine campaign had added to our difficulties, and was to be renewed later with tremendous effect. The year closed with two British disasters—the abandonment of Gallipoli and the failure of the mad attempt to reach Baghdad, which entailed terrible suffering to our forces in Mesopotamia, the fall of Kut, and a heavy blow to British prestige in Persia and throughout the East.

This was the time selected by Mrs. Besant to launch her Home Rule movement, and to secure the return of the Indian extremists to the National Congress,<sup>1</sup> which henceforth became an increasingly effective instrument for promoting disaffection and the race-hatred which her paper *New India* actively promoted. The All-India Moslem League inspired by the Ali brothers, subjects of a native state, subsequently joined forces with the Congress, and within a year a small band of agitators grew into a large organization, demanding absolute political independence for India. In June, 1917, as the result of the scathing Report of the Royal Commission on the administration of the medical services in Mesopotamia, Mr. Chamberlain, whose actions were not involved, resigned, and Mr. Montagu was appointed Secretary of State for India. Mr. Montagu had distinguished himself previously by uninformed criticisms on British Government in India, and his selection at this critical juncture naturally aroused

<sup>1</sup> The extremists, led by Tilak, had been expelled from the Congress at Surat in 1907, after violent scenes, and had conducted an independent agitation until he was arrested in January, 1908. His return with Mrs. Besant's assistance had a disastrous effect on this body.

expectations which he proceeded to justify. On 20th August, in reply to a casual question in Parliament, he made a declaration of policy so worded as to be capable of interpretation which might even propitiate Mrs. Besant and her political friends, and at the same time he announced his intention of visiting India to receive "the suggestions of representative bodies and others." From this time onwards, two tendencies became painfully visible and led to disorders on a great scale. On the one hand, Mr. Montagu engaged in the creation of atmospheres favourable to the projects which he was incubating. On the other hand, the Indian agitators were quick to realize that the fears of the new Secretary of State could be exploited, and they proceeded to organize a campaign of intimidation intended to influence opinion in England and to raise an anti-British ferment which could be turned to account as occasion required.

Two results, on which a volume might be written, quickly followed. The British Government in India began to be afflicted by creeping paralysis, which weakened the administration of the law and assisted the objects of the extremists. A long series of outrages commenced, of which the dangerous rebellion in the Punjab (1919) and the murderous Moplah rising in Malabar (1921) were the outstanding examples. Till the end of the Great War, the followers of the National Congress and the Moslem League continued to harass the Government to the utmost of their power, while the Princes and Chiefs and the fighting classes of India rallied nobly to the cause of the Empire. Mr. Montagu's atmosphere helped to inspire a widespread belief, which was duly encouraged and became a mob slogan, that the British Raj was passing away. In such conditions, the Indian Constitution took form and came into force transferring power into the hands of the disloyal elements.

In November, 1917, the Secretary of State, with the

Viceroy and some minor officials, began his tour of a few of the great cities of India, during which he received numerous deputations and interviewed leading politicians and Mrs. Besant. No attempt was made to get in touch with the agriculturists, whose representations were ignored.<sup>1</sup> On 5th June, 1919, Mr. Montagu stated that the conclusions on which his Bill was based were the result of protracted discussion for two years, and that general agreement in India and in England had been attained. No measure of such transcendent importance was ever so little discussed and all idea of agreement was rudely dispelled by the Indian politicians themselves as soon as the details of the measure became known.

In July, 1918, when the military situation in France was still grave, and the Germans were able to report the capture of 2,476 guns and 15,024 machine guns since 21st March, the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, the most amazing State paper ever issued, was made public. Previously, however, our many reverses in France had suggested to the extremists the desirability of starting agitation in England, and selected emissaries, including Tilak and Bepin Chandra Pal, were accordingly despatched. In the absence of Mr. Montagu, the Government ordered the return of these delegates.

The first five chapters in this Report, which very few people in this country ever studied, are occupied with political history prior to the advent of Mr. Montagu, and with a disquisition on the Morley-Minto Reforms—not then seven years old—which is inadequate and far from accurate. The authors state their conviction that “even from the beginning, political institutions must be devised with due regard to the conditions under which they will be worked”—a copy-book maxim embodying an impregnable truth,

<sup>1</sup> A selection of these interesting and pathetic documents was published by the Indo-British Association. Otherwise they would never have seen the light.

which they subsequently forgot. Chapter VI, *The Conditions of the Problem*, evidently written by a Civil Servant with a facile pen and local knowledge, gives a true but incomplete account of the state of the ancient people upon whom Mr. Montagu proposed to confer the blessings of democracy. This is by far the most interesting and accurate section in a Report of 300 pages and, if it was passed by the authors without editing, they are to be congratulated. A few passages will give some idea of the illuminating character of this chapter, which clearly ought to have been placed in the forefront of the Report. Unfortunately, it is marred here and there by futile admonitions, which could never reach, or affect in the slightest degree the ingrained habits and customs of the masses to whom they are apparently addressed, and which may have been interpolations by the sanguine constitution-mongers. Thus the 320 millions of India, composed of many races, having the most diverse qualities, and speaking fifty languages, are gravely told that :

“The (democratic ?) system presupposes in those who work it such a perception of, and loyalty to, the common interests as enables the decision of the majority to be peaceably accepted. This means that majorities must practise toleration and minorities patience. There must, in fact, be a certain capacity for business, but, which is more important, a real perception of the public welfare as something apart from, and with superior claims to, the individual good.”

Excellent advice if given to the great political parties here ; but consider the conditions of the heterogeneous peoples for whom it appears to be intended !

“The immense masses of the people are poor, ignorant and helpless, far beyond the standards of Europe. . . . There runs through Indian Society a series of cleavages

—of religion, race and caste—which constantly threaten its solidarity.”

These pregnant statements can convey no real meaning to anyone who has not lived in and studied the life of India.

“British India has two and a half times the population of the United States.

“We may say that 226 out of 244 millions of people live a rural life, and the proportion of those who ever give a thought to matters beyond the horizon of their villages is very small.

“They are not concerned with district boards or municipal boards. . . . Of Parliament, and even of the Legislative Councils, they have never heard.

“In British India, 6 per cent. of the population . . . were able at the last census (1911) to comply with the test of literacy which consisted in reading and writing a letter in their own script.”

Such a test of “literacy” is futile, and in the case of a large number of these literates, the power of writing and reading is quickly lost after leaving school.

“The knowledge of English is confined to less than two million people, a fractional percentage of the entire population.”

Not one million have a working “knowledge of English.”

Of the interests “of the ryot” it is correctly explained that :

“A simple, cheap and certain system of law is one of his greatest needs.

“One of his constant needs is protection against the exaction of petty official oppressors.

“He has never exercised a vote on public occasions.

. . . These facts make it an imperative duty to protect him while he is learning to shoulder political responsibilities.

"The rural classes have the greatest stake in the country, because they contribute most to its resources."

In the course of a cold-weather tour of a few cities, Mr. Montagu was able to discern "the infallible signs that indicate the growth of character," and he thus arrived at the momentous conclusion :

*"That the placid, pathetic, contentment of the masses is not the soil on which such nationhood [nationhood within the Empire] will grow, and that, in deliberately disturbing it, we are working for her highest good."*

I have given only a few of the more important, because accurate, passages in Chapter VI. Anyone, knowing India, who will carefully compare them with the Constitution outlined in the succeeding chapters, cannot fail to note a complete contradiction. Nothing that the 226 millions of cultivators in British India are said to need or to desire is provided for. Pious aspirations, which cannot be fulfilled, are substituted for practical statesmanship, and Mr. Montagu's "very dangerous experiment" is being tried because of "the faith that is in us."

At what period the disastrous Mr. Lionel Curtis supervised is not certain; but in 1917 he went to India to advertise the great principles of dyarchy and to evolve one of the most crazy Constitutions ever concocted by an ingenious doctrinaire who knew nothing of the country, or the people selected for experiment. Mr. Montagu and the Viceroy rejected the scheme as a whole, but adopted the unheard-of dyarchical device. Their Constitution imposed a complete Parliamentary system, to which Lord Morley said he would never agree, upon India. Large



Councils dominate the Provinces. A "National Assembly" and a "State Council" in which the executive is supposed to have a majority, take charge of India as a whole. The electorates, subsequently arranged, though only 2 per cent. of the population, are numerically large and very complicated, but they deprive the 226 millions, who "live a rural life" and contribute most of the revenue, of any effective political influence.

So far the Constitution follows generally the lines of the democratic institutions which work with more or less success in countries where the population is fairly homogeneous and has not 94 per cent. of illiterates. It is in the construction of the executives that the inspiration of Mr. Lionel Curtis appears. The dyarchical principle entails a dual Council consisting of (1) the Governor and a mixed body of experienced Civil Servants and selected Indians, and (2) Indian "Ministers," chosen for their assumed influence as elected members of the Legislative Councils. The business of the administration is divided into "reserved" and "transferred subjects," distributed respectively among executives (1) and (2), the preservation of law and order, which affects all "subjects," being nominally entrusted to the former. There are elaborate suggestions as to the way of working this impossible system, which devolve upon the unfortunate Governor. So far as can be gathered, Mr. Montagu and the Viceroy believed that "Ministers" would introduce and defend their own measures in the Councils and would resign in case of rejections, thus carrying out the theory of an executive responsible to an elective body, which, except in the United States, is the approved democratic principle. If executive No. (1) disagreed with No. (2), the Governor was to use his efforts to secure harmony! In administering their "subjects," "Ministers" were to be subject to the advice and control of the Governor, who obviously could not prevent decisions supported by a large majority in his

Legislative Council. The supreme Government was revolutionized by the institution of a bi-cameral Parliament.

The Indian Civil Service, as a whole, is unlearned in political systems ; but Mr. Montagu succeeded in attaching to himself a small group of individuals who were liberally rewarded. The Heads of Provinces took strong objection to the dyarchical plan, and made alternative proposals which the Secretary of State ignored. The reception of the Report by the Indian extremists and Mrs. Besant was exactly as might have been expected. Tilak spoke of it as "a miserable cheese-paring measure," and another leader called it "the monster foundling of Round Table politicians" in compliment to Mr. Lionel Curtis. The Home Rule League demanded its instant rejection, and Mrs. Besant declared that it was "leading to a line beyond which its authors cannot go—perpetual slavery, which can only be broken by revolution." Gandhi, whose ominous star was beginning to rise above the Indian horizon, was hopeful that the Congress might still attain its objects "by sheer obstructive and destructive agitation," which he proceeded to organize.

In India, therefore, Mr. Montagu had failed to placate what he described as the "limited intelligentsia," had created a lurid atmosphere, and was forced to plan further concessions, while the British people at the greatest crisis in their history, when their fate was still undecided, were uninformed, and inevitably apathetic to the complex problems of India. The Government of India Bill was at length referred to a carefully arranged Joint Select Committee, to which Mr. Montagu, whose policy was to be reviewed, appointed himself and his Under-Secretary of State, Lord Sinha. Political deputations, in which Mrs. Besant was prominent, arrived in London, and quickly got into touch with the "Labour" Party, which, interpreting democracy here as government by the manual workers, was anxious to transfer all power in India to a little minority

of English-speaking politicians,<sup>1</sup> whose main object was to get power over the 226 million helpless people who "live a rural life" and contribute most of the revenue. Masses of evidence, mostly futile as representing Indian opinion, were taken. The Committee declined to hear the opinion of any non-English-speaking Indian, thus excluding some of the shrewdest brains in India. Nor would they hear any representatives of the fighting classes who suffered and died for the Empire in most theatres of war.<sup>2</sup> With the able assistance of Sir James (now Lord) Meston at his elbow, Mr. Montagu was able to secure some at least of the further concessions which the various self-appointed deputies urged upon him in the Committee room and behind the scenes. The Bill thus emerged in a form which rendered the Government of India far weaker, especially in regard to finance, than the Report appeared to contemplate, and all the conditions which Lord Curzon had laid down were flagrantly violated. Special urgency now supervened, and the most momentous Bill, from the Imperial point of view, ever presented was rushed through Parliament, many amendments not being discussed, while all were rejected. This indecent haste was doubtless due to Mr. Montagu's belief that the erection of his Constitution would at once bring peace to India.

The elections at the end of 1920 were in some cases farcical, and the new Councils quickly began to impede the re-establishment of order. The year 1921 was marked by a succession of riots, political strikes and outrages, culminating in the Moplah rebellion, which severely

<sup>1</sup> The spectacle of the Brahman politician, belonging to the most privileged class in the world, and of the parasitic lawyer in close alliance with Labour Members would have been irresistibly comic, but for the tragedy in the background.

<sup>2</sup> I pleaded in vain for the admission of the evidence of these two classes.

taxed the resources of the Government. Until the Government of India was induced or forced to arrest Gandhi, there was no lull, and the visits of the Duke of Connaught and H.R.H. the Prince of Wales were deliberately marred by disorders, which, in some places, were of a serious character. Mr. Montagu had succeeded in paralysing the operation of law and emasculating the local authorities, while his frequent amnesties and the favour shown to the enemies of Britain alienated our natural allies. As a loyal and distinguished Indian soldier wrote in 1921 :

“ Everything in these days is carried by the extremist wind-bags and by their subsidized papers. All the well-wishers of the Government have been boycotted. Almost every extremist has been selected as Minister throughout the country. The party which brought about chaos in the Punjab has got new facilities to predominate. . . . Thanks to the high officials, there exists no Government of its name in India. Government has already lost its respect and prestige.”

Such were the natural results of Mr. Montagu's policy, which was based upon concession to organized clamour and ignored the vital necessity of maintaining order—the primary duty of civilized governments. He placated no one and he built up a whole host of new enemies, ready to become facile dupes of the Bolshevik propaganda—skilfully adapted to Indian conditions—which has been stealthily developed. His Constitution remains, and its leading features can be briefly indicated.

British power to guide and to restrain has been limited to vetos and certifications which can rarely be exercised, and to the personal qualities of the members of the rapidly dwindling British services. Authority has passed to a small oligarchy which has no basis on representation of the people. Of a nominal 900,000 voters for the Legislative Assembly in a population of 250,000,000, the number

who went to the polls was 180,000, or 1 in 1,400 of the total. For the eight Provincial Councils about  $5\frac{1}{2}$  millions were qualified to vote, and about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  millions registered their preferences. Of these voters, many had no idea of the meaning of their electoral privilege, and ridiculous expedients were devised to secure their support.<sup>1</sup> If we imagine the House of Commons to be elected by about 28,000 voters, membership being confined to persons literate in French, it becomes possible to form a rough idea of democracy as applied to India. India is to be ruled by what Mr. Montagu accurately described as a "limited intelligentsia," and the persons who loudly demand a "dictatorship of the proletariat"—the class which breeds—applauded his scheme.

One curious result follows. By the vast masses of simple agriculturists, whose existence Mr. Montagu recognized in Chapter VI of the Report, and then proceeded to ignore, the Raj, in spite of what the professional agitators assert, is still regarded as in being, and will be held responsible for everything that they resent. The doubling of the salt tax will be felt by the humblest of "the immense masses," whom Mr. Montagu correctly described as "poor, ignorant and helpless, far beyond the standards of Europe," though providing most of the revenue. The Assembly has thrown out this measure, because the chosen of the people would not agree to the taxation of income from land, to succession duties, or even to a more rigorous collection of income tax, which many rich Indians scandalously evade. The increased salt tax, certified by the Viceroy, may be bitterly resented, and the agitators with Bolshevik assistance will ascribe it to British oppression. Our

<sup>1</sup> In Burma the application of the Constitution was delayed and opposed even by the Government of India. A local agitation having been engineered, Mr. Montagu prevailed, and at the elections last year a little more than 5 per cent. of the voters returned the candidates for the Assembly.

responsibility to the Indian peoples remains, while our power to discharge it has been destroyed.

Another, and a peculiarly dangerous, process has begun. The great British public services are literally withering away, and the "steel frame," which Mr. Lloyd George discovered after the departure of Mr. Montagu, is cracking from top to bottom. As Lord Peel explained on 1st March, the total number of applications for premature retirement is 227, including fifty (already sanctioned) from the Civil Service, eighty-one from the Police, and thirty-three from the Public Works Department. Anyone who knows what these services have done in keeping the peace and in securing the wonderful progress of India under British Government will understand what this wastage of experienced officers must entail. The clearest warning of what Mr. Montagu's headstrong policy would inflict upon the public services was given more than four years ago. A new commission is now to inquire whether the disaster can be retrieved.

The working of the Constitution must be judged by what has happened in more than two years, remembering that in 1920 the Councils were supposed to be boycotted by the advanced politicians, who are now considering whether they will stand in the coming elections. The Constitution has, of course, not operated as its authors expected, and some of its provisions have proved a dead letter. The dyarchy practically disappeared, and the various executives appear to act as unified bodies. "Ministers" never resign if their measures are rejected; but they often fail to support the executive even on important occasions. The "moderate" Councils have made a pastime of defeating their Governments, and have shown a marked tendency to cut down expenditure on security services, and to reduce the British elements in the administration. The bureaucracies have been swollen, in accordance with the invariable practice of democracy, and the

transaction of business has been delayed and complicated. The cost of what was the cheapest of governments has grown considerably, and will largely increase in the future. The special powers vested in the Viceroy and the Provincial Governors are proving illusory, and the executives, that of the Supreme Government especially, appear to be cowed by the elected bodies. The Assembly in 1921 repealed the Press Acts, operating as a merciful check on revolutionary organizations, which, it was asserted, had ceased to exist; the Moplah rebellion, an artificial outbreak, quickly followed. This august chamber rejected the Princes Protection Bill on first reading, though it was a measure promised to the Council of Princes as some safeguard against imported revolution in their States and the outrageous blackmailing which has long been prevalent. In this case, the Viceroy was prevailed upon to use his power of certification, and in consequence the measure was made the subject of a most mischievous debate in the House of Commons. The Assembly has also distinguished itself by passing embarrassing resolutions directed to upset the Constitution with a view to immediate Home Rule. The Upper Chamber has shown its teeth by passing a resolution in defiance of the Government, demanding the appointment of Indians to high posts irrespective of fitness, after an anti-British speech from Mr. Srinavasa Sastri, a much favoured "moderate." The Parliament of India has also succeeded in securing action by the Colonial Office in Kenya, which has brought the British builders of the colony very near to rebellion.

Speaking broadly, the Constitution has provided effective machinery for developing and demonstrating racial antagonism. It is noteworthy that, in its first year of power, the Council of the Central Provinces rejected a resolution to allow the lower castes access to water supplies provided from public funds.

It must be presumed that the framers of the Constitution

intended to benefit the peoples of India, but everything that they claimed for it has been falsified by events. Only a little minority has gained by the power conferred upon it, which has been used to exploit the ignorant and excitable masses for political purposes, and is now to be employed to exploit them economically by high tariffs. And this minority, far from being satisfied by Mr. Montagu's largesse, has been rendered more than ever hostile. His regime has been marked by financial confusion, not all due to the war which brought great wealth to India. A sadder result of his theories has been the loss of more Indian lives in internal disorders than occurred during the whole period since the Great Mutiny. In these apathetic days, some outstanding outrage is required to draw public attention to the condition of India, which is now assumed to be tranquil. Lawlessness is, however, steadily increasing, and the number of dacoities has become alarming, while corruption flourishes. This naturally follows the lapse of authority, and it will grow with the crumbling of the British services.





**PART III**  
**SOCIALISM**



## XXIV

### THE PERIL OF SOCIALISM

(“*Nineteenth Century and After*,” March, 1918.)

On my return to England in 1913, after more than five and a half years' absence, the growth of organized Socialism appeared to be the most ominous change, and I regarded the *Report on Reconstruction* prepared for the Labour conference at Nottingham (January, 1918) as a portent which could not be disregarded. When attributing the authorship to “Fabian doctrinaires,” I did not know of the existence of *Wanted a Programme ; an Appeal to the Liberal Party*, published just thirty years earlier by Mr. Sidney Webb, then an official at the Colonial Office, and “printed for private circulation among leading London Liberals.” This remarkable effusion closely and curiously resembles the *Report on Reconstruction*. Thus Mr. Webb, while a salaried public servant, demanded :

“Revision of Taxation. Object—complete shifting of burden from the workers, of whatever grade, to the recipients of rent and interest, with a view to the ultimate and gradual extinction of the latter class.”

Mr. Webb's political programme, aiming at “the most accurate representation and expression of the desires of the majority of the people at every moment” was briefly :

1. Adult suffrage, “Parliamentary and Municipal.”
2. “Annual Parliaments.”
3. “Payment of all public representatives, Parliamentary, County, or Municipal.”
4. “Abolition or painless extinction of the House of Lords.”

Whether this purely revolutionary scheme attracted any of the “leading London Liberals” to whom it was secretly circulated, I do not know ; but that the gist of it should have reappeared in 1918 as the suggested platform of the then powerful “Labour” organizations is distinctly interesting.

The childishly absurd theories which I strove to expose in this article are still widely cherished and employed to deceive the more ignorant of the electorate ; but, when I wrote, the war was entering on a most critical stage and public attention could not be effectively

drawn to this new attempt to plot the ruin of our country. There have been modifications of the Report, because the *Intelligentsia* which directs "Labour" in these matters has discovered practical difficulties in the "Capital Levy" and now tends to prefer an annual impost of £100,000,000 a year or more drawn from the class of "recipients of rent and interest" which Mr. Webb proposed to extinguish. His crazy and disastrous theories have still to be fought, and my warnings and detailed criticisms are not obsolete. The ruin which these theories, put in practice in a self-supporting country, have wrought in Russia has been explained in the revealing books of Mr. Lancelot Lawton, and Professors Anton Karlgren and Sarolea; but they were nevertheless endorsed by the recent "Labour" Conference at Blackpool, and they must now be regarded as the basis of the policy of the Opposition.

THE war has made plain the evils and the weaknesses of our political, social and industrial systems. Defects, clearly seen by the few, are now glaringly apparent to the many. The commingling of the efforts of all classes in war work of every kind—on many stricken fields and in hospitals, offices and workshops—has brought about a new and sympathetic understanding of grievances that are preventable and of needs that must be fulfilled in the future. The mind of the nation is set upon a reconstruction which shall be the starting-point of a purer, healthier and happier life that every honest worker with hand or brain may share. This ideal is not impracticable; but it can be attained only on conditions which are inexorable.

When the war ends, we shall be faced with a heavy burden of accumulated public debt and also with new demands that can be met only out of revenue. Past experience, which is the only safe guide, tends to show that the burden should not prove intolerable. The public debt, which stood at £664,263 after the Revolution of 1688, had mounted to £791,817,339 in 1846, owing to the long wars of the French Revolution and Empire, and the charges had risen to £28,121,622. Public expenditure in 1846 stood at £58,437,891. We may now have to

bear a debt of more than 6,000 millions; but we are already raising a revenue of about 573½ millions,<sup>1</sup> and the increase in the ratio of the national wealth to the public debt since 1846 has been so great as to justify the belief that the economic situation following the war should not be unmanageable.

The vital condition of national solvency is an increase of production, which the vast resources of the Empire, still undeveloped, render possible with the assistance of the skill acquired and the immense extension of new machinery that have become available during the war. The problem of national reconstruction, with all that it involves to the future of the State and of the Empire, can be solved only by the application of science in the widest sense to the economics of commerce and industry, by hard work of hand and brain, and by the mutual confidence and co-operation of Labour and Capital, under the guidance of a wise and far-seeing Government.

But more than this is needed. *Our commerce and industry form the most intensely complex fabric ever built up, and it rests mainly upon resources external to the United Kingdom.* Russia, self-supporting in food and with huge undeveloped possibilities, can in time recover from any financial disaster, if a stable Government, capable of maintaining law and order, is established. For us, not only dependent upon oversea trade for the necessities of life and of manufacture, but subject to sharp competition in the markets of the world, there could be no such recuperation. Our rivals in production would quickly supplant us, and we should be reduced to hopeless national bankruptcy. Organic changes in our industrial system when peace returns would, therefore, bring about irretrievable disaster, and only a smooth transition from war to peace conditions can enable us to hold the place which we have won and to secure such an expansion as will enable the

<sup>1</sup> Year 1916-1917.

debt charges to be borne and the amelioration of the conditions of the national life, which we all desire, to be accomplished.

Reconstruction is already occupying many minds. Boards and committees are engaged in examining the economics of production from various points of view, in scientific research on a large scale, and in seeking to promote harmonious relations between Labour and Capital. Employers' federations and associations, as well as bodies appointed by Government, are studying industrial problems, elaborating plans of profit-sharing, and showing an earnest wish to remove all the legitimate grievances of which labour complains. The Whitley Report marks a great advance in the direction of bringing employers and employed into closer touch, of giving the latter a voice in arranging labour conditions, and of enabling differences to be adjusted before they become acute. The proposals have been well received, and steps are being taken to put them into effect in certain trades. A great measure of public education has been introduced, which is intended to extend and improve the instruction of the people and to afford them fuller opportunities of advancement and a wider outlook on life and affairs. New enterprises of many kinds, which can provide employment on a large scale, are being studied, and schemes for dealing with public health, housing, the prevention of undeserved poverty and the care of infant life are being prepared. There has never been such an awakening to national needs, or such a strong determination to fulfil them, as that which the war has created.

Meanwhile, out of the tremendous evils, the cruel losses and the shared sorrows and sufferings which Prussian ambitions have inflicted upon the world, there has arisen a truer sense of brotherhood. The splendid gallantry and the uncomplaining endurance of our sailors, soldiers and the seafaring population have powerfully appealed to our

imagination. We realize that to them we owe a debt that can never be repaid. They and their as gallant comrades from the Dominions and India saved the Old Country at a time of mortal peril and have drawn closer the bonds of Empire. Wherever the flag flies, there has been a breaking-down of the artificial barriers which separate classes and interests. Devoted personal service has been forthcoming to an extent formerly unknown, and money has flowed lavishly into channels directed to relieve distress and to help in softening the asperities inseparable from war. In this growth of what can best be described as general kindness, there is hope for the accomplishment of the difficult tasks that lie before the nation.

While, however, one set of minds is thus employed in seeking to abolish remediable ills, and to repair the ravages of war in accordance with the principles which civilized societies in all ages have hitherto accepted, another set is busily engaged in propagating theories entailing the destruction of freedom, the negation of all the lessons of the war, the rendering vain of the sacrifices of our best manhood, and the ruin of the nation. The *Report on Reconstruction* prepared for submission to the Labour Conference at Nottingham, in order that it may be discussed before the "Party Conference" to be held in June, should be carefully studied by all who are following events in Russia. It has evidently been written by Fabian doctrinaires and perhaps touched up here and there by a Labour leader in order to adapt it to the manual workers' point of view. The theories propounded were largely made in Germany, and the Germans may be trusted to make the most strenuous efforts to secure their adoption in all the Allied countries. The text is taken from a statement attributed to the Japanese statesman, Count Okuma, that "the civilization of all Europe is even now receiving its death-blow," and



"we of the Labour Party . . . recognize in the present world catastrophe, if not the death, in Europe, of civilization itself, at any rate the culmination and collapse of a distinctive industrial civilization which the workers will not seek to reconstruct."

There are, therefore, to be a new heaven and a new earth in which all the experience of the ages is to be ignored, and it is sufficient for the propagandists to paint the crudest picture of an ideal State, without attempting to prove how this end can be attained. All this was foreshadowed twenty-three centuries ago by Plato, who, however, evaded industrial difficulties by excluding "artisans and merchants" from his Republic. The new civilization which the theorists who advise the Labour Party propose to build up brick by brick is to rest

"not on an enforced dominion over subject nations, subject races, subject colonies, subject classes, or a subject sex, but, in industry as well as in government, on that equal freedom, that general consciousness of consent, and that widest possible participation in power, both economic and political, which is characteristic of Democracy."

This, like much else in an amazing composition, may be an attractive arrangement of words; but it is nothing more. The dominant note is false, and the plan would lead to anarchy—not democracy. These ideals are professed by the Bolsheviks, whose conception of "equal freedom" and of the "general consciousness of consent" is interpreted by the use of machine guns against persons who do not agree with them. At the same time, consistently with their views of "the widest possible participation in power," they elect as director of a great Technical Institute ranking as a University its door-keeper, while the woman who officiates as Minister of Education under

the auspices of Lenin appoints a housemaid as head-mistress of a famous girls' high school.<sup>1</sup>

The spirit in which the great problems of reconstruction are approached by the Fabian theorists is illustrated by the following passage :

“ The individualist system of capitalist production, based on the private ownership and competitive administration of land and capital, with its reckless ‘ profiteering ’ and wage-slavery ; with its glorification of the unhampered struggle for the means of life and its hypocritical pretence of the ‘ survival of the fittest ’ ; with the monstrous inequality of circumstances which it produces and the degradation and brutalization, both moral and spiritual, resulting therefrom, may, we hope, indeed have received its death-blow. With it must go the political system and ideas in which it naturally found expression.”

There are many grave blots on our social system, which all humane men and women are keenly anxious to remove ; but progress, in recent years, has taken on accelerated speed. There is no comparison between the position of the industrious and sober workman now and half a century ago. What is miscalled “ wage-slavery ” may still linger ; but it tends to disappear, and to apply the term to the organized trades, with the insinuation that the class they represent is being degraded and brutalized, is a flagrant perversion of the truth. These trades dominate the market and have been able to dictate their own terms with little regard for the consequences to unprivileged labour. There may be bad employers who show no sympathy with their employees, as there are bad workers, who, on syndicalist principles, dishonestly stint their efforts ; but the great majority of employers are sincerely desirous to be fair and just, while among our employees are the best artisans in the world. “ Inequality of circumstances,” by which in-

<sup>1</sup> Petrograd correspondent of the *Morning Post*, 25th January, 1918.

equality of worldly goods is apparently meant, has existed in all communities since the world was inhabited, and will continue in some measure to the end of time. On the other hand, one of the most significant features of the "individualist system of capitalist production" is the fact that the majority of large fortunes are now made by men of the manual workers class. Mr. Schwab, President of the United States Steel Corporation, stated not long ago that, at a gathering of forty successful men at which he was present, only two had been at college. All the rest had started life as poor boys and worked their way up from the bottom of the ladder with no advantages other than industry and exceptional aptitudes. With us, the same rise to wealth is almost as easy and as conspicuous. The only possible inference is that the possession of special qualities will always command wealth in free countries.

The most painful aspect of the turgid passage quoted and of the Report as a whole is the evident object of stirring up class war by the use of catchwords calculated to deceive because never defined. If the hand belongs to the Fabian Society, the voice is that of Karl Marx.

"Reckless profiteering" plays an important rôle in literature of this kind, and is part of the stock-in-trade of the "pacifist" who confines his belligerency to his fellow-countrymen and regards with mild disapproval the unparalleled atrocities of "our German friends." That deliberate attempts to make pecuniary gains out of the distress of the nation should arouse strong resentment is just and right. That it should receive more prominence in Socialist lucubrations than the appalling crimes recorded by Lord Bryce's Committee, or by the author of *Murder Most Foul*, is inexplicable. That it should apparently have the effect, in many minds, of weakening the determination to save the world from the Prussian yoke, indicates a childish petulance which defies comprehension.

Increased profits in war-time may accrue from (1) a

deliberate attempt to exploit the situation, (2) the creation of new or the extension of old businesses to meet the exceptional demands, and (3) the astonishing financial arrangements made by uncontrolled Government Departments. Of these, (2) may be automatic and can be blamed only if the producer passes on to the consumer charges disproportionate to the increased prices which he has to pay. This process is subject to check in the case of certain commodities, and Mr. Clynes, at Nottingham, effectually disposed of some of the false statements which have been circulated among the manual workers. Moreover, excess profits pay 80 per cent. to the State, and no one would suggest that the manual worker whose wages have been raised by war conditions from £2 to £10 a week should be similarly taxed. Operations such as (1), especially if they are concerned with the food of the people, are peculiarly odious. They undoubtedly occur; but they are not numerous, and the law might be strengthened to deal with them. The charge of war profiteering is a dangerous weapon of the boomerang type in the hands of organized labour, which forms the only class that, as several of its leaders have frankly admitted,<sup>1</sup> has profited *quâ* class, by the war. Lieutenant-Colonel Sir F. Hall, M.P., has pointed out that advances in wages

“mostly granted within the last year or eighteen months, total well up to £200,000,000 a year. Add to that anything from £50,000,000 to £100,000,000 in the shape of increases given by various arbitrations and concessions, and you get an additional expenditure of something in the neighbourhood of £250,000,000 to £300,000,000.”<sup>2</sup>

The manual workers are perfectly entitled to wages covering

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Barnes was attacked at Nottingham for a statement of this nature, and unfortunately did not make the defence which was ready to his hand.

<sup>2</sup> The *Sunday Times*, 20th January, 1918.

the advance of the cost of living, and no one who realizes the strain entailed in some departments of war work would for a moment grudge them something more than that. Remembering, however, the strikes and threats of strikes appeased by successive increases of wages, the accusation of war profiteering does not come well from classes which ignore the real stress thrown upon many thousands of persons who have no means of increasing their incomes at the public expense, and who keenly feel the burden of high taxation and high food prices. Privileged labour equally forgets the large number of households—some of them of modest dimensions—which have from the first rigidly adhered to the scale of rations laid down. If all classes had been as scrupulous, the present food stringency would have been greatly mitigated.

“The difficulty [writes Mr. Clynes] is this : the workers are under the impression that food troubles are not due to real shortages, but to inequitable distribution and to the power which money has been able to wield over the claims of ordinary men. It is not too much now to say that that is an absolutely wrong impression.”<sup>1</sup>

By impressions great masses of men are moved, and in false impressions, spread with design and not effectively countered, danger lies. There are doubtless millions who believe that strict rationing would at once transfer food from the well-to-do classes to themselves, and there will be bitter disillusionment when it is discovered that relief from this source cannot be forthcoming.<sup>2</sup>

The “pillars” of the new civilization are catch-words ;

<sup>1</sup> The *Sunday Herald*, 20th January, 1918.

<sup>2</sup> The imposition of sharp restrictions on consumption in the great restaurants should have been the first measure of food control. It could have made no sensible difference in the national supplies ; but it would have prevented the growth of impressions of inequality, sure to be bitterly resented.

the foundations rest upon wild assumptions. It is easy to brush away every practical objection by the statement that "to-day no man dares to say that anything is impracticable"; but the one thing which has proved "impracticable" in all ages is to change human nature, and such a change is the first postulate of Socialism. The authors of this "Report" have not taken the trouble to disguise the spirit of envy that has fostered injustice since the days of Cain, and over their confused picture runs the red streak of class war. "The Universal Enforcement of the National Minimum; the Democratic Control of Industry; the Revolution in National Finance; the Surplus Wealth for the Common Good"—what are these but phrases veiling economic ruin? Now, as always, only "righteousness"—implying thrift, industry, sobriety, self-control and common sacrifices—"exalteth a nation." To raise the standard of life, health and happiness among the poorer classes of the community should be the first object of every true citizen<sup>1</sup>; but it cannot be attained by methods which would entail universal poverty, tempered by corruption on a vast scale.

The first "brick" in the new edifice is:

"The National Ownership and Administration of the Railways and Canals, and their union along with the Harbours and Roads and the Ports and Telegraphs—not to say also the great lines of steamers which could at once be owned, if not immediately directly managed in detail, by the Government—in a united national service of communication and transport: to be worked, unhampered by capitalist, private, or purely local interests (and with a steadily increasing participation of the organized workers

<sup>1</sup> The progress already made in the prolongation of life, the increase of small savings, and the decline in pauperism are full of hope, and show conclusively that the resources of the present civilization are not exhausted.

in the management, both central and local) exclusively for the common good."

It is not difficult for those who have followed the business transactions of governments during the war to imagine what this stupendous "united national service" would be like, when every valid safeguard for economy in administration had been removed and the management passed into the hands of elected and paid politicians of all classes. The "extraction of coal and iron" is similarly to be "worked as a public service," while "the retail distribution of household coal" is to be carried on "as a local public service by the elected Municipal or County Councils." By such steps, we are to reach the goal of the "Common Ownership of the Means of Production," and meanwhile there is to be a "rigid fixing for standardized products of maximum prices at the factory, at the warehouse of the wholesale trader, and in the retail shop."<sup>1</sup> Every incentive to trade being thus destroyed, that convenient and illusive entity known as "the State" would step in, and every worker by brain or hand would become a salaried servant whose career would depend upon a gigantic bureaucracy supervised by elected amateurs mainly anxious to secure votes. We are not told whether *all* private property in the "nationalized" concerns is to be confiscated. This essential feature in the new civilization is discreetly veiled; but there are significant hints of the real objects. Thus we are told that the Labour Party "will offer . . . the most strenuous opposition" to any proposal to "hand the railways back to the shareholders," and will "decline

<sup>1</sup> The fixing of prices has helped to produce scarcity except when associated—as in the case of bread and potatoes—with heavy public expenditure, which would not be possible in peace time. The French Revolutionists tried the expedient by the "Law of the Maximum" of September, 1793, which could not be enforced even by the death penalty, was found to aggravate distress, and was soon abolished.

to be dependent on usury-exacting financiers." The authors of these expressions of opinion appear to be unaware that the railways have not been taken away from the shareholders. All that has happened is that their managers act under the orders of Government as regards traffic rendered necessary by the War, and that Government indemnifies the shareholders for the loss, if any, thus arising. The trustees of the great Trade Union funds <sup>1</sup> doubtless fulfil their duty to their clients, and these funds are presumably placed in interest-bearing securities. Are the trustees, therefore, "usury-exacting financiers"? Through the "Report"—unavowed, but implied—runs the infamous doctrine of Proudhon, "All property is theft," which the Bolsheviks are consistently carrying into effect to the accompaniment of murder.

The "Revolution in National Finance," which is sketched with a light hand, is incompatible with or unnecessary to the rest of the programme. When the nationalization of all activities has been accomplished there will be nothing to tax. Meanwhile, there is to be a

"capital levy chargeable like the Death Duties on all property . . . with exemption of the smallest savings and for the rest at rates very steeply graduated."

To this is added a regraduation and a great increase of the present death duties so that the Exchequer will become "normally . . . the heir to all private riches in excess of a quite moderate amount by way of family provision," <sup>2</sup> while "the present unduly low minimum income" assessable to income tax is to be raised, and a graduated tax rising "up to sixteen or even nineteen shillings in the pound is to be imposed." The "Capital Levy" is peculiarly attractive to the Socialist because it is regarded as

<sup>1</sup> These funds exceeded £5,500,000, in 1911.

<sup>2</sup> By this method alone, all private capital would, after a term of years, tend to disappear.



a means of ridding the world of the hated "Capitalist," the "Capitalist system," "Capitalist Government" and "Capitalist wars" at one stroke. The extraordinary difficulties of raising a levy on property with any approach to justice and of ensuring that the State shall obtain the new money it requires have been frequently explained. The trade of the burglar needs the assistance of the receiver who is able to market his acquisitions, and where, as in the majority of cases, a man's whole property consists of (1) his house, freehold or on lease, and his furniture, (2) his brains which give him an income, and perhaps (3) some invested savings and a life insurance policy, the difficulty must be obvious. The State would be unable to realize (1), cannot take (2), and might find the stock representing (3) unsaleable. And while the State could not manage an Exchange and Mart for houses, furniture, pictures, or little scraps of land scattered over the country, the owner may be unable to raise cash even by the method of mortgage, which in the circumstances might be impracticable. In the case of large capitalists, the same difficulties must arise where money is locked up in securities. Enforced sales would cause a heavy fall in the markets the effects of which would be far-reaching, as the rich Trade Unions would quickly discover, and as the great majority of our capitalists are persons of small means, the losses due to depreciation would fall upon many humble homes. The great Joint-Stock Companies, Banks and Insurance Corporations could meet the levy only by gravely weakening their position, with consequent injury to the interests of very large numbers of persons already struggling with their own difficulties in raising cash. On the other hand, where large bank balances awaiting investment existed, the methods of Lenin could be adopted. The levy would work smoothly where War Loan scrip, which many persons have bought by stinting themselves as a patriotic duty, could be handed over.

The net result of the "conscription of wealth" would be a general dislocation of business, the destruction of credit, the transference of capital to other countries and a burning sense of injustice and inequality, while the cash gained by the State would be miserably disappointing,<sup>1</sup> and permanent sources of revenue would be irretrievably lost. Mr. Bonar Law has "not given consideration" to the "academically interesting" subject of the capital levy; but, as he reminded the House of Commons, Mr. Snowden had

"shown before the War how, if that sort of thing was to be done . . . it could be done, quite as effectively and far more easily, by using the income tax and the super-tax, not for the raising of revenue, but as a means of confiscation."<sup>2</sup>

The Socialists propose to use all these methods and having effectually exterminated the capitalists, they still count upon "the steeply graduated Taxation of Private Income and Riches" in combination with "Nationalization and Municipalization" to balance their huge budgets. It must be evident that nationalization and municipalization of production will yield no increase of income unless the property so treated is stolen from the owners. If the latter are bought out by the means of State or Municipal loans, which *ex hypothesi* could not be raised, or if the State or Municipality takes over the shares and pays the normal dividends, there will be no increased revenue, and in either case, as the administration charges will rapidly mount, there will soon be a deficit.

There is not the smallest attempt to show how the "Revolution in National Finance" can provide either the

<sup>1</sup> The German levy, enforced to assist in perfecting war preparations, was recognized as a failure.

<sup>2</sup> House of Commons, 29th January, 1918.

necessary revenue or the immense new capital required for the various projects indicated. We read of "the surplus," "the constantly arising surplus," "every surplus for the common good," but "Reconstruction" on the lines proposed would obviously exclude the possibility of any real surplus and thus destroy all hopes of raising the general standards of the national life.

The conscription of wealth is an old device in Eastern countries, where it effectually prevented progress.' It is responsible for the buried capital of India which, if the *pax Britannica* is maintained, will gradually emerge and be turned to the advantage of the country. Wherever applied, it must lead to secret hoarding. No one will deny that "Society . . . does not exist only for perpetual wealth-production"; but, in a modern State, dependent like our own on commerce and industry, the production of wealth is vital to existence. The fundamental fallacy of Socialism is that the State can become the wealth-producer by destroying the only powerful incentive to saving—the freedom of the individual to own and accumulate property for the benefit of himself and his family under the security of the law.

Recent statistics give the number of persons paying super-tax at 27,628, while the gross public revenue from direct taxation is £412,742,740,<sup>1</sup> in addition to the ever-increasing municipal levies and very large sums voluntarily contributed to public objects. The incomes super-taxed are not "devoted very largely to the senseless luxury of an idle rich class." The majority of these persons work as hard as the artisan class, and many render unpaid services to the State which would otherwise make considerable demands on the revenue. There is a small idle and luxurious minority, which before the War indulged in

<sup>1</sup> As the super-tax is levied on gross incomes, none of these persons actually received the annual amounts with which they are credited in the Returns.

vulgar and provocative ostentation, just as there is a minority of idle and intemperate manual workers, and no place for either class can be found in any scheme of national reconstruction. "Senseless luxury" apart, it would be found, if analysis were possible, that these large incomes are either expended in ways which create employment or are partly saved and applied to enterprises which extend the range of employment. Among the super-tax payers are men who can create new and develop old industries and expand commerce when peace returns, while at the same time contributing heavily to the public revenue. The Fabian reconstructors say that the classes who pay direct taxation will not "willingly forgo the relative immunity that they have hitherto enjoyed," and others warn their pupils that "every possible effort will be made to juggle with the taxes" in order to place "an unfair share" of the national burdens upon "the shoulders of the mass of labouring folk and the struggling households of the professional men." Gladstonian finance contemplated a rough equality between direct and indirect taxation. The proportion is now 82 to 18 per cent., and the suggestion of probable juggling is as ungenerous as it is false to recent experience. But for the income-tax payers, the War could not have been carried on, and the country would have been at the mercy of the Germans. After the War they must bear higher taxation, and they will do so cheerfully, leading simpler lives, practising more thrift and working harder. Under a wise system of taxation, inequalities of wealth will diminish<sup>1</sup>; but the first object must be to avoid the destruction of enterprise by which alone national welfare can be restored and increased. If the incentive to saving is obliterated by the confiscations and the destructive

<sup>1</sup> Sir Thomas Whittaker, M.P., effectively exposes the falsity of the assertion that the rich are growing richer and the poor are growing poorer in this country.—*Ownership, Tenure and Taxation of Land* (Macmillan and Co.).

taxation which the Fabian visionaries propose, the means of existence of the manual workers will tend to disappear, and the schemes of amelioration which we all cherish will become for ever impossible.

There is nothing new in the "Report" except that the Fabian Society has now become "We of the Labour Party." Every item in the programme has had a practical trial, and the results have been inhuman tyranny, wholesale murder, and anarchy. The creed of the Socialist is traced in the blood of innocent citizens. The theorists, whether dreamers or fanatics, have never been able to control or direct the forces which they set in motion, though some of them have found means of making money out of the ruin of their fellow-men. Orléanistes, Girondins, and Terrorists alike failed to ride the whirlwind of the French Revolution, as completely as did Lamartine, Ledru-Rollin and Louis Blanc that of 1848. The proposals of to-day were made in 1789-97; but France was then little industrialized, and the "nationalization of production" took the form of State workshops, which reappeared in 1848 with effects economically disastrous and widely demoralizing. From the Paris Commune, formed after the fall of the Bastille to dominate France, to the present Bolshevik régime, there is an unbroken record of the sanguinary achievements of Socialism and of ruinous failure to fulfil the promises of its high-priests. The "liberty, equality and fraternity" held out in 1789, like the other catch-words "peace and plenty," which raised Lenin to power in 1917, translated themselves quickly into merciless tyranny, civil war, unemployment and starvation.

The lull after Waterloo was followed by the rising of 1830 and the widespread Socialist insurrections of 1848, which involved Paris, Berlin, Dresden, Vienna and Budapest, with an echo in London. The Commune of 1871 faithfully reproduced the terrible events of 1793, which were again repeated in Spain in 1873-4 and in Russia in

1905, and are now being re-enacted. Always, after a practical demonstration of the meaning of Socialism, the minds of men have recoiled for a time from the atrocious realities, and always the formulæ have reasserted themselves, and the movement has again gathered strength. In more than a century, there has been no real change in Socialist doctrines ; but Karl Marx first impressed a strong international character upon the movement, while Lassalle in 1863 started the organization of German workers on Socialist principles, which was copied by the Democratic Federation in 1882 and later by the Independent Labour Party.<sup>1</sup> Henry George, with his single-tax fallacy, gave a fresh impetus to land nationalization, meaning compulsory confiscation.<sup>2</sup> The major prophets of Socialism, from Babeuf onwards, have been foreigners, and their British disciples have only embroidered and spread their doctrines.

The linking together of the Socialists of all countries for the purpose of the class war, which Marx designed, is now, after varying fortunes, giving rise to hopes of a peace to be attained by conferences of manual workers. After 1871, the German Socialist vote rapidly increased, and there were signs of growing ferment before 1878, when Bismarck applied repressive measures with temporary success. Subsequently the Socialist vote again increased ; but another process was at work which tended to check the movement. Germany was being steadily tutored by her Prussian rulers into the belief that Might is Right, that world-dominion was her manifest destiny, and that unquestioning trust in an all-powerful State was the first duty of the citizen. As militarism progressed and megalomani-

<sup>1</sup> Other bodies followed, and while they disagree among themselves and sometimes intrigue against each other, they unite in bearing aloft the Red Flag.

<sup>2</sup> *Progress and Poverty* was published in 1881, and the Land Nationalization Society was founded in the following year.

mania developed, the strength of Socialism declined, and the British Socialists who fondly imagined, even when Germany was feverishly putting the last touches to her vast armaments, that their "comrades" would be true to their supposed creed, were quickly undeceived. The International proved a broken reed, and only the failure of the war-lords to achieve the expected triumphs and the hardships which the German people have long borne could have revived the hopes of a peace to be attained by Socialist conferences. Unless Prussian militarism is finally broken, the class war is unlikely to raise its head—in Germany. On the other hand, the German Government has with conspicuous success endeavoured to set the Socialist machinery in operation in the countries of the Allies.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, the Russian Fabians have been able to wreck a great Empire, to rob the Allies of victory last year, and thus to prolong the martyrdom of mankind. The enthusiasm with which representatives of the wreckers were received by a minority section at the Nottingham Conference was a sinister portent.

How far the British manual workers have been led to believe in the ruinous fallacies of Socialism will soon become apparent. The propaganda has been as tireless as mendacious, and the promises held out appeal to the most universal of the elemental passions—easy acquisition and freedom from restraint. The appeal is thus formulated :

"Millions of you are now armed, trained, and disciplined. You have the power, if you have the will, to sweep away your enslavers for ever. Then take final control of your country and all that it contains. Wealth to-day may be made as plentiful as water if you will but seize the enormous engines for creating goods now at

<sup>1</sup> In uncivilized countries like Morocco, the German Government, having no Socialist organizations to stimulate, has endeavoured to incite the natives to massacre.

the disposal of man in society. Wage-slavery, capitalism and poverty will at once cease. The vast wealth created by the labour of all will be distributed for the benefit of every member of the community.”<sup>1</sup>

The form of the appeal is varied to suit the classes addressed; and in “the New Social Order,” which is enjoined upon organized labour, this crudely anarchical advice is wrapped up in plausible phrases. The objects are the same, and while the amiable Socialist theorists follow Louis Blanc in protesting that their objects are peaceful, all experience shows whither their efforts must lead.

The British workman is by nature self-reliant and individualistic. It is difficult to believe that he will swallow the nostrums of the Socialists without attempting to inquire into the validity of the reckless assumptions upon which they rest. That the State can be turned into a wealth-producer capable of making surpluses far exceeding those at present available for the remuneration of labour is refuted by the everyday experience of the war, and must be dismissed as an impossibility by every one who reads history or reflects upon facts. The State could at most exercise a cursory supervision over the vast army of officials to whom must fall the management of all business enterprises. The revolutionaries who proposed to govern France by a loose aggregate of communes locally ruled, at least recognized that a central administration of all public and private business was not likely to succeed. The conversion of “wage-slaves” into paid Government servants would entail the end of the freedom of the individual and the conscription of all labour under State discipline.<sup>2</sup> Even the bad employer would be preferable to the political “boss” who might take his place.

<sup>1</sup> Extract from a leaflet *Truths for the Workers* which has been widely distributed by the National Socialist Party.

<sup>2</sup> This aspect of Socialism was effectively depicted by the late Eugene Richter in *Pictures of the Socialist Future* (Allen & Unwin).



The means by which the Socialist millennium is to be attained in Russia have recently been explained by Lenin :

“ We stand for class violence against other classes, and we are unperturbed by the wails of those who are disconcerted by the sight of this violence. . . . It is mere prejudice to think that the simple workman and the simple peasant cannot rule the country.”<sup>1</sup>

The French Socialists set about the extermination of the people whose property they had seized. Their Russian imitators have moved in the same direction. Nevertheless the representatives of Leninism at Nottingham won applause in jarring contrast with the note of true patriotism sounded by the Chairman of the Conference.<sup>2</sup> According to the Socialist theory, “ the simple workman and the simple peasant ” are ruling Russia. In actual fact, a small camarilla,<sup>3</sup> maintained in power by Red Guards bribed with stolen money, is exercising the most shameful tyranny over those who do not share its views and, having rendered Russia defenceless against her only enemy, is engaged in waging civil war. No “ rule ” exists in Russia, and anarchy prevails from Petrograd to Vladivostok, where the Japanese may find it necessary to intervene. The Lenin tyranny is drawing to an end and may, according to precedent, be succeeded by one of even greater violence, which will last until a strong man with organized military force behind him arises to restore peace and order and to confer upon Russia the free institutions which, but for the Socialists, she might now be enjoying. The Bolsheviks have already achieved a greater destruction of human life,

<sup>1</sup> Speech at the Congress of Soviets, 25 January, 1918 : *Reuter*.

<sup>2</sup> “ We owe it as a duty to those who have made the supreme sacrifice and to those who have been disabled in the war to carry on until a clean peace is secured, which will enable the peoples of the world to live in security ” : Mr. Purdy.

<sup>3</sup> Largely of non-Russian or Jewish extraction.

and have dealt a more deadly blow to their country, than the French Revolutionists. The appalling object-lesson which they have given to the world is plain for all to see. Is it possible that our manual workers will fail to draw the obvious conclusions? Will they not realize that the forces of Revolution are incalculable, and that the only certainty is that the extreme minority will seize power and proceed to the most detestable forms of tyranny?

Out of this stupendous world-convulsion, the gold and the dross alike have been thrown up to the surface. Which shall triumph in the clash of forces and ideas when the time comes to heal the wounds of war and to rebuild the shaken social and economic fabric of the nation on a broader basis? The British people in all lands have given the finest examples of patriotism that history records. Our sailors and citizen-soldiers have displayed gallantry and endurance unsurpassed in any naval and military annals. Our civil sea-going population has shown devotion above all praise and has faced danger in the spirit of true heroism. The great majority of our manual workers, with many thousand women, have given their best without stint to save the world from Prussian domination and to guarantee the freedom of mankind in the future. The patience of the poor when food stringency appeared is a touching proof of loyalty to the national cause. But since the war began, there has been an increasing minority, which has sought to draw advantage from the afflictions that all have shared, to create class-hatred when the minds of men and women were softened by common sorrows, and to work consciously or unconsciously in the interests of the enemies of mankind. And as disappointments and losses multiplied, and the disaster entailed by the utter demoralization of the greatest army that ever existed changed the whole military situation and brought new anxieties and heavier burdens upon the splendid men who uphold the national honour on sea and land, so this minority, drawing

fresh inspiration from the ruin of Russia, extended the sphere of its activities. Dangerous fallacies and alluring promises have been spread broadcast among people who have neither the time nor the knowledge required to analyse them.

That is the peril of Socialism, which claims to have found the cure of all human ills by methods that have left the darkest stains upon history. Only by the harmonious co-operation of the best brains of all classes, working unselfishly for the common good, can our problems of reconstruction be solved, and never was there such an earnest desire to seek the solution in the spirit of goodwill and mutual concession. This alone will not suffice. Reconstruction must depend largely upon the action of Government, which will have to undertake duties hitherto neglected or inefficiently discharged. Changes in the system of land tenure and in the law of inheritance will be needed. Assistance in various forms will be required in the development of the vast resources of the Empire. Information will have to be collected, and research encouraged and systematized. Some measure of interference in private undertakings will be necessary, and certain laxities in commercial law, which check honest enterprise, must be removed. Interference of this kind will not be resented, if it is intelligently applied and directed with a single eye to national advantage. We have learned by the bitter experience of war to distrust politicians and political appointments with the Party caucuses behind them. Purity in government, as in trade and commerce, will be demanded. The bureaucracy must be trained on more scientific lines, and strong but enlightened Treasury control must be asserted to arrest the reckless waste which has been permitted in recent years. Such in brief are some of the reforms vital to reconstruction.

Democracy will be put to the proof in the immediate future, and must stand or fall by what it can accomplish

in securing strength and rectitude in government, and in subordinating rhetoric to statesmanship capable of raising the moral and material standard of the national life.

Socialism, with its class-war, denial of freedom, destruction of the inducements to individual effort, and communistic principles which have always led to wholesale corruption and immorality, is the greatest enemy of Democracy.

## XXV

# SCIENCE AND LABOUR UNREST

*(Below is the Presidential Address delivered at the Goldsmiths' Hall on 17 June, 1919, to the British Science Guild.)*

The British Science Guild was started by the late Sir Norman Lockyer and, in its twenty-two years of existence, it has done much useful work. As President, it devolved upon me to deliver three annual addresses. In 1919, I chose as my subject the action and interaction of scientific developments upon labour conditions and mentality. The need of some of the warnings which I tried to give eight years ago was strikingly illustrated by the economic disaster of last year. After this ruinous example of the effects of "Labour Unrest" fomented by alien agency, it may be that the fundamental principle that "The interests of all classes and sections of the body politic are inextricably interwoven" is, at length, better realized.

IN one sense it may be said that the Labour Unrest which now menaces industrial progress, and even civilization, in many parts of the world, is due to the triumphs of applied science. In another sense, it may be true that Science—using the word in its broadest sense—can play a leading part in providing remedies, and in securing the industrial peace which alone can enable existing evils to be overcome, and can help to place national prosperity on a broad basis, so that it may be shared by all honest workers by hand or brain.

Man has been well described as a tool-making animal, and in devising tools, and in supplying power to drive them, science has played a dominating part. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that the revolution of the conditions of Labour, which tools and power have

inevitably brought about, has led to wide-spread discontent, and accounts in some measure for the anarchical doctrines now publicly advocated.

Primitive man had no need for lessons in political economy. The dire struggle for existence forced upon him certain inexorable laws. He was obliged to find food for himself and his family, which he could do, in the earliest stages, only by collecting wild products, by killing wild animals, or by stealing either or both from his fellow-tribesmen. Some Australian aborigines are practically in this stage of existence to-day, and in India such conditions can be found at a short distance from great railway systems. In the next stage, man took to cattle-owning and cultivating, while the dawn of small industries appeared, giving importance to skill in handicrafts, involving exchange by barter or token, stimulating the germs of scientific thought, and necessitating a rudimentary social organization.

Out of these humble beginnings have developed the vast and intensely complex systems of modern trade and industry—the systems against which some manual workers appear to have set themselves in angry revolt. But this long evolution was relatively slow, until science began to equip mankind with power. The invention of the steam-engine was the starting-point of gigantic changes in the social and political conditions of the Western world. I can only indicate the magnitude of those changes in barest outline. Coal and iron quickly assumed first-class importance, and our possession of these valuable resources, combined with immunity from the wreckage due to the Napoleonic Wars, gave to this country, after the peace of 1815, initial advantages which were turned to full account, raising Great Britain, within seventy years, into the position of the great workshop of the world. The industrial life of the nation was revolutionized. The economic employment of power necessitated a continuous

increase in the size of undertakings, which has not yet reached a limit. Large factories, followed by groups of factories, thus arose, bringing masses of people into the industrial centres, and creating a host of new social problems. At the same time, highly organized railway systems and great shipping lines sprang up, both employing large numbers of men, with duties upon the orderly and regular performance of which the interests of the whole community became dependent. Without steam, the population of London could not have reached its present dimensions, and wherever great concentrations of people grew up, the distribution of food, lighting, heat, water supply, and drainage demanded *highly-organized* services, upon the efficient continuity of which the life and health of the city-dweller now rests. The failure of some of these services during a small period of time would entail disaster, while none could be long interrupted without serious consequences.

The telegraph system covering the country, the cables linking all countries, the telephone, even the typewriter—all these developments rendered possible a huge extension of commercial activities, and, by the powers they conferred, conduced to the building up of large businesses. It followed that small undertakings diminished, and that, as the capital required for great industrial and commercial projects grew to vast dimensions, the private firm was replaced by the Joint-Stock Company, and the direction passed into the hands of Boards.

All these and other important developments were directly due to the effects of applied science upon production, failing which the present population of these islands could not find the means of subsistence. Conversely, the rapid growth of population rendered the home food supply totally inadequate to the needs of the people, and Great Britain became dependent for food upon the overseas trade, itself dependent upon the export

of manufactured goods and such raw material as coal. At the same time, as our home resources were wholly insufficient to maintain our vastly extended home industries, they also became dependent on imported raw materials. Speaking broadly, therefore, it may fairly be said that the triumphs of applied science, which are still rapidly proceeding, have transformed the social, industrial, and economic life of our country, have made the grouping of business into large undertakings essential in many cases, have tended to eliminate the private firm managed by one or two individuals, and have created such an interlocking of public interests that none can suffer without far-reaching effects which must react upon the whole community. Perhaps, however, the greatest of the triumphs of science is that it has rendered possible an enormous increase of economic production, which, bound up with the overseas trade, supplies the means of existence of our present population. If our production, or that trade, falls away, there must be universal poverty and destitution, and large numbers of people will be forced to emigrate or perish.

How have the tremendous changes which I have roughly sketched affected the manual worker? I can only give a bare indication of the complex ways in which the conditions of Labour have been influenced. In the first place, the employment of power, which has not nearly reached its limit, has diminished, and will still further diminish the total muscular exertion required in production, or will further modify its application. Very large numbers of workers are now tenders of machines, which unerringly perform even delicate operations, while making little demand on the muscular system. Threshing by the flail, which I am old enough to have seen, has been replaced by the less strenuous and different work of feeding a machine. The hard labour involved in cutting a field of corn with the scythe is now replaced by duties entailing little exertion. From the physical point of view, the



change from hand work to the machine is extremely important, although fatigue of another kind has supervened.

Operations being more and more performed by the automatic power-driven machine, the manual skill required has decreased, but will never wholly disappear. The craftsman to-day is not more skilled than those of Greece and Rome. The Bombay mill hand is infinitely less skilled than the Indian hand-loom weaver belonging to an hereditary caste who, with a primitive machine, produces amazing results. From the point of view of large production, his position is hopeless; but he can still beat the power loom with some special products, and while it is easy for him to learn the work of a mill, a man of another caste could never acquire the manual skill which he has inherited from a long line of ancestors. Thus, modern industrial conditions, arising from the progress of science, have rendered manual skill of less importance in mass production than organization, expert direction, and the scientific employment of large capital. The experience gained during the war has clearly proved that women unaccustomed to the workshop were quickly able, in a short time and with complete success, to do work formerly regarded as requiring long training. By far the greater part of the manual work of to-day, whether below or above ground, can be performed by uneducated Indians, Chinese, or natives of South Africa. This organic change from past conditions has evidently many disadvantages; but it is the inevitable result of the perfection of the power-driven machine, upon which the means of subsistence of large populations have become dependent.

Another grave drawback sprang from the wonderful success of Great Britain in gaining initial industrial pre-eminence. The process was rapid. Great undertakings, industrial and commercial, arose and multiplied. Capital

increased on a large scale, and was applied to further activities. Meanwhile, manual workers crowded into manufacturing centres, and came to be regarded too generally as pawns in the industrial game. As long as they were forthcoming in sufficient numbers, and were willing to work with regularity, their special needs were not adequately considered. There have always been good employers, who studied the comfort of their workmen, and there are mining and industrial dwellings which leave little or nothing to be desired ; but although much has been done, with varying success, in the last fifty years to improve the position of the working classes, slums and dwellings unfit for human habitation were allowed to accumulate. This great evil, with all its manifold and deplorable results, could have been averted if taken in hand before it grew to large dimensions. Now, we are face to face with heavy arrears of rebuilding, aggravated in recent years by the operation of the Budget of 1909, by the rules of the Bricklayers' Union, and by the Great War. The just claims of the workers are now realized and admitted. We must, at huge expense, remedy evils which, if vigorously tackled in good time, would not have come into existence.

If the vital housing problem was neglected during the years in which the present industrial system was being built up, other matters affecting the life of the workers were equally ignored, until the war turned a searchlight upon them. I have pointed out that the intensity of muscular exertion has been diminished ; but industrial fatigue in many aspects persists. The monotony of tending a machine, though it may not cause physical exhaustion, does entail nervous strain, and leads to psychological effects of several kinds. Hours of work have been generally too long and not well arranged. There has been too much overtime, resulting in cumulative industrial fatigue. These and other questions were

studied by Sir George Newman's Committee on the Health of Munition Workers, and we now have valuable information which, if wisely applied, can save the worker from undue stress and provide him with time for wholesome recreation. The study of the elimination of unnecessary movements, and of enabling work to be carried on with the least fatigue, was started in America, and is certain to make way in this country. It is claimed that, as a result of this study applied to mould-making, output was increased 165 per cent. and wages 64 per cent., while the reduction in cost was 54 per cent. In the purely manual labour of unloading pig iron, the corresponding percentages were 500, 69, and 66. There is here a new branch of science, which can directly benefit the manual worker, and at the same time increase production.

In the days when the employer worked by the side of his men, or at least knew them all personally, community of interests was evident. The employees acquired not only a knowledge of their several duties, but of the conditions of the business generally. Certain simple economic laws were obvious to them. With the huge undertakings of the present day all this was changed. Boards directing businesses, sometimes with branches far apart, could not be in direct touch with the workmen, whose interests, in matters of detail affecting their comfort, fell into the hands of foremen and managers largely drawn from their own class. For the reasons which I have given, the necessity for providing means of frequent consultation between representatives of employees and the Company Boards was forgotten. The former, therefore, came to regard themselves as entangled in the cogs of a ruthless machine, which determined their conditions of life, and the term "wage-slavery" was invented to stimulate discontent. Moreover, the extreme complexity of a great modern industry was not understood by the workman, who had never been taught elementary economic laws, and who

found the proceedings of the business in which he was engaged wrapped in mystery. There has been far too much secretiveness in these matters, and rarely was an attempt made to enlighten the employees as to essential economic facts. The Fabian Society was, therefore, able to assert more than thirty years ago that the workman only received one-third of the value of the results of his labour, and this wild fallacy, which could easily have been refuted by the publication of simple explanatory figures, found ready acceptance.

Trade Unions were the outcome of the natural desire of the working classes to protect their interests, and to gain the means of collective bargaining. They have done much good, and they might have proved an unmixed benefit to the working classes and to the whole community. But, as they grew into powerful organizations, instructed leadership became more rare, and grave mistakes of policy were made. The use of personal intimidation and strike methods to force all workers into their ranks was a deadly blow to liberty. The meticulous regulations limiting the output of the individual worker, coupled with a spy system and penalties for non-observance, have proved economically disastrous. They have not only kept down wages, but created unemployment. It was shown during the war that boys from an Elementary School could earn £4 15s. per week, as compared with a man's pre-war earning of £2 10s., and that women, after a short training, could earn £6 to £10 against £4 to £5.<sup>1</sup> Morally, the effects were even worse, because very large numbers of men were taught that it was a duty to be dishonest. The policy of some Unions has taken the form of a struggle to prevent "unskilled men" (so-called) from doing work which they are perfectly able to perform, and the result has been to create a privileged aristocracy of labour, which shows little regard for the classes below it.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Lynden Macassey, K.C., *Edinburgh Review*, April, 1919.

From the national point of view, the limitation of output is ruinous, and if it is continued, our country can never shoulder the burden of the war, and the amelioration of the condition of the manual workers, which we all desire, will be impossible. For the attitude which the Unions have assumed the employing class are not free from blame. I have already pointed out that, in the rapid transformation of industries, the interests of the workers were disregarded, and their share in profits has not always been adequate ; but if the output of the workman had not been restricted, pre-war wages would have been considerably higher. The too general experience in this country, contrary to that in America, is that a rise of wages causes a reduction of output. The most recent instance is the large increase of the wages of coal miners, which has been forced upon the taxpayers, and which was followed by a decrease of output, already disastrously low.

I have tried briefly to indicate some of the causes of Labour unrest before 1914. The war caused an immense rise of wages, estimated by Mr. Crammond at £900,000,000, and a great rise of prices, which the working classes are being taught to believe to be due to profiteering. War, however, always raises the price of commodities, and there are many contributing factors in this case, such as actual shortage, the loss of about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  millions of tonnage, due to German piracy, heavy taxation, the foreign exchanges, the inflation of the currency, the great diversion of labour to unproductive work, and, not least, high wages paid by borrowed money. Profiteering—wages apart—has played a relatively small part in the general rise of prices. No one will defend, and everyone desires to check, real profiteering as far as possible ; but much of it is automatic in war conditions, or due to the methods of government.

In an interesting article in the *Edinburgh Review*, Sir Lynden Macassey describes some of the economic fallacies

which Labour has been induced to accept, and among them are the beliefs that wages have no effect on prices, that the limitation of output is an advantage to the wage-earner, and that all the demands of Labour can be liquidated out of the profits of the employers. These are doubtless honest misconceptions on the part of many workers; but for some time strenuous attempts have been made to exploit legitimate grievances and to spread falsehoods for revolutionary purposes. Sir Lynden Macassey states that in every other workshop on the Clyde the doctrines of Karl Marx are quoted. The main tenets of this German plagiarist of Babeuf are that all the proceeds of Labour are the rightful property of the manual worker, and that only by the Class War, enabling Labour to seize all the means of production, can the prosperity of the workers be secured. It is not their fault that they have no idea of the amount of brain work of all kinds needed to start and maintain any industry, and they vaguely imagine that brain workers are superfluous. For years little children in the Socialist Sunday Schools have been taught to sing a hymn containing the lines :

Our own right arm will quickly show  
*Us all sufficient* here.

That is the doctrine of Marx, which Lenin and Trotsky have enforced with the bayonet and machine-gun wherever their murderous tyranny has extended; but they have been obliged to engage experts at large salaries, and to apply conscription with cruel severity to labour. During the war, the National Socialist Party widely distributed a leaflet, with the following appeal :

“Millions of you are now armed, trained, and disciplined. You have the power, if you have the will, to sweep away your enslavers for ever. Then take final control of your country and all that it contains. Wealth may be made as plentiful as water if you will but seize the

enormous engines for creating goods now at the disposal of man in society."

This is exactly what the Bolsheviks have done, with the results that we partly know.

Other Socialists demand the nationalization or State ownership of all the means of production and distribution. From the anarchical communist down to the promoter of municipal enterprises there is a graduated range of opinions agreeing only in the desire to abolish private capital, and consequently the only certain incentive to industrial and commercial progress which mankind has hitherto possessed. Of the nationalization or State management of industries there is a mass of unfavourable experience, and at the time when our miners are pressing for the nationalization of coal mines, a German Commission reports its signal failure.

The present Labour unrest is thus partly due to real grievances, partly to fallacies which would be ludicrous if they were not fraught with tragedy to the working classes and to the nation, and partly to a revolutionary propaganda supported by Germans, Russians, and, to a minor extent, by Indians. Before the war and since, it was a great object of German policy to foment revolution in the countries of the Allies, and the blood-stained dictators, who have wrecked Russia for a time, well know that their one chance of maintaining power is anarchy in Europe similar to that which they have created.

Unfortunately, the Great War, by destroying the economic basis of production, and by causing a huge expenditure of borrowed money devoted to non-productive purposes and involving an inflated currency with low purchasing power, has had the effect of stereotyping some of the gross fallacies which the manual workers have swallowed.

With the end of Government borrowing, economic laws

will inexorably assert themselves, and unless pre-war production can be increased, national ruin is ultimately inevitable. The wealth and prosperity of a nation depend absolutely upon an excess of production over consumption, and everything which hampers production, or tends to create wasteful consumption, must injure the vital interests of the community as a whole. Inequalities in the distribution of wealth, which are already less marked than in former times, may and will be further diminished; but the destruction of capital, or in other words of savings, would not only prevent the extension of industries, but would ruin those that exist. The revolutionary Socialists lead their dupes to believe that capital exists in tangible form, available for confiscation and distribution. With the exception of the cash held by Banks, and the insignificant amount in private hands, the bulk of the national capital rests upon credit. The value of all Government Securities, which are now held by many millions of people, depends upon the stability of government. All share capital similarly depends upon the prospects of profitable enterprise. If the efforts of the revolutionary party in this country were successful, almost the whole of the national capital not invested abroad would instantly shrivel away. In production lies our only hope of recovering from the gigantic losses of the war, and of securing higher standards of life and continuity of employment for our manual workers. It is certain that these great objects can be fulfilled on condition of industrial peace. It is as certain that the present Labour unrest is not only causing unemployment, but is gravely prejudicing the resumption of peace activities, upon which the overseas trade, now threatened with formidable competition, depends.

Happily, some circumstances are in our favour. Government, during the war, has wisely assisted research on a considerable scale, and has instituted investigations which have thrown fresh light on the problems of



economic production. Our leaders of science have laid the foundations of new industries, and have enabled us to regain some that had been lost. It has been made clear that, as compared with America, we are not making sufficient use of power and machinery, and that this in part accounts for the low production of the British worker. In the economic use of power on a large scale, and in a more scientific management of industries, lies the key to the prosperity of the working classes and to the problems of national reconstruction. Good wages, shorter working hours, better housing, a voice in determining working conditions, and an insight into the economics of industry—all these things and more are accessible to Labour, and employers are anxious to meet their employees on terms of goodwill.

Fair prospects lie before us; but they can never be realized unless the fallacies to which I have referred are discarded and every manual worker honestly puts forward his full effort within the agreed hours of labour. There is no idle class in this country; but idlers exist in all classes, and there can be no room for them in the strenuous times which we must face. Knowledge we now have in abundance. Our future existence as a nation and an Empire depends upon whether we have wisdom in all classes. Science, which has unconsciously caused some of the evils which we must remove, can now point the way to the restoration of national prosperity. Education, which—imperfectly assimilated and sometimes ill-directed—has contributed to the ferment of wild ideas from which the world is now suffering, may in time be able to implant an understanding of the fundamental laws of national and industrial economics. It will at least increase the flow from the ranks of manual labour to that of brain work, which is now far more than ever important to industrial and commercial progress.

Out of the intense complexity of modern life, one

central fact stands forth in the clearest light. The interests of all classes and sections of the body politic are inextricably interwoven. No horizontal lines can be drawn across the social structure. No class can suffer, no class can assert extravagant claims without affecting the whole community. Labour and Capital have all their real interests in common, and must find the means of working in harmony and mutual confidence. The right to strike cannot be denied ; but, if exercised with reasonableness and understanding, it will not, as too often in the past, injure the workers, inflict hardships on the non-organized classes, and confer advantage on our trade rivals.

Of the future no wise man would care to prophesy ; but one thing is certain. Our civilization has blemishes which can be removed ; but civilized mankind will not permanently revert to autocratic tribal rule wielded by self-constituted Soviets, composed of idealists and scoundrels, who rob and murder at their will. The appalling political object lesson, which martyred Russia is giving to the world, will not easily be forgotten.

## XXVI

### THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

*(The speech here republished was delivered in the House of Lords on 22nd July, 1920, in the course of a debate on Lord Parmoor's Motion "to call attention to the constitution of the League of Nations and to the terms of the Covenant and to ask to what extent the provisions of the Covenant have become operative.")*

So momentous an instrument as the Covenant of the League of Nations was never evolved in so great a hurry or with so little thought, and Parliament was committed to it without debate. I believed that there is much useful work which a League of Nations could accomplish ; but I disliked and distrusted the Covenant, and I pleaded in this speech for changes which I still consider necessary if the League is to benefit mankind. My main fear, however, was that the League might become a source of danger to the Empire. Anyone who has followed the proceedings of the costly International Labour Bureau at Geneva must realize that Socialist exploitation is possible, and that Resolutions passed by this Internationalist body can be used to foster agitation.

The warning, which I vainly attempted to impress upon the House of Lords in 1920, was perfectly justified seven years later when Sir A. Chamberlain was forced, in September last, to remonstrate with the Assembly in these significant words :

"Ladies and Gentlemen, you do not know what you ask us. You are asking nothing less than the disruption of the British Empire. I yield to no one in my devotion to this great League of Nations ; but not even for this League of Nations, will I destroy that smaller—but older—League of which my own country was the birthplace, and of which it remains the Centre."

The League has done much good work, as I expected ; but, as a Court of International Appeal protecting the rights of small nations, it has not distinguished itself. In the crucial case of the destruction of the infant Republic of Georgia—recognized as an independent State by the League—at the hands of the Red Army, no stern protest against this crime was forthcoming at Geneva.

MY LORDS, I do not propose to detain the House for more than a few moments. I am sorry to introduce a jarring note after the harmony of the three speeches [those of Lords Parmoor, Bryce, and Haldane] to which we have just listened. Notable speeches were made in the debates in March and June of 1918, and they are most interesting reading at the present moment, if you will refer to them. We have gone very far since those days. One of the things we have is a Covenant which has never been discussed in Parliament, and some of the provisions of which were pronounced by the principal speakers in those debates as quite impossible. The genesis of the League of Nations was not fortunate. By mixing it up with the Peace Treaty, that Treaty was delayed for months, with results which are already irreparable.

I only want to say very briefly how the question now stands. We thought that the American people were heart and soul with us in the League of Nations. We now know that they were sharply divided. It is not for us to say a word about their policy ; but we must face facts, and that is what it seems to me so many of the advocates of the League of Nations fail to do. To my mind it is certain that America will never join the League of Nations unless some modifications are introduced into the Covenant. But it is certain that there can never be a valid League of Nations unless America joins it wholeheartedly. In the debates to which reference has been made, we had distinct warnings against hurry, both from the noble Earl who leads the House and from Lord Parker, whom we sadly miss this afternoon. Those warnings were disregarded.

Since 1918 there have been practically three main considerations that have presented themselves—fresh considerations which we cannot ignore. In the first place, there must be noted the extreme difficulties with which the Supreme Council struggled. Negotiations were broken

off, which might have resulted in chaos. That chaos has not happened is a tribute to the Prime Minister and his colleagues, for their patience and earnest endeavour to arrive at a settlement. But the moral is that if three or four Great Powers, with force behind them, find it so difficult to arrive at a settlement, what can a League of Nations, composed of thirty or forty nations, do when a difficult question comes before them?

My noble and learned friend [Lord Parmoor] suggests that the League of Nations should substitute itself for the Supreme Council. I can only say that if this were done I do not think any conclusions whatever would be arrived at.

In the second place, we have been told that a very large sum of money is required in this country to create an atmosphere favourable to the League, and I imagine that at least £10,000,000 would be required to create the world atmosphere which seems to be necessary to produce the success we should all like to see.

In the third place, only the other day a group of very earnest people went as a deputation to the Prime Minister. They are people who desire, as we all desire, to abolish war. They went in a deputation to the Prime Minister, begging him to set up an International Army without any delay. In the debate in June, 1918, the noble Earl the Leader of the House [Earl Curzon of Kedleston], in my opinion, knocked the bottom out of the idea of an International Force, and, speaking as an old soldier who has not quite forgotten all the principal studies of his life, I must say he was absolutely and entirely right. You can, of course, have a combination of force for specific purposes, and it is most fortunate that we have such a combination at the present moment; otherwise I think that nothing would be done. But you can never have an International Force organized, administered, and controlled by a League of Nations. My noble and learned

friend [Lord Parmoor], when he introduced this question in 1918, wanted a tribunal whose orders should be enforceable. I confess that I did not quite know what he meant, but if he meant that he realized that force is necessary behind all law, whether domestic or international, then I entirely agree with him. Under the Covenant of the League of Nations that body can always threaten, if it can arrive at a completely unanimous opinion, which must be a very rare occasion. But it would have no means of backing its threats by force, and they will be invalid threats—merely idle threats. The noble Earl who leads the House and the noble Marquess, Lord Lansdowne, both pointed out the impossibility of limiting armaments and of securing that any limitation set down would be closely observed.

I ask your attention to Article 8 of the Covenant which, for all practical purposes, I believe to be useless. At least I do hope that this old sovereign State will never submit to the humiliating inquisitions which Article 8 lays down. Then there is Article 10, which the Americans, I believe, will never accept, and I cannot understand how anybody who realizes what it means can accept it. That Article says that the Powers undertake to preserve against external aggression the territorial integrity of all States, which must include the new States which are now being artificially constructed. When, for example, the Hungarians decide to throw off the yoke of Rumania, as they certainly will do when the great national forces in Europe begin to bestir themselves again, can the League of Nations take up the cudgels against them? They will then be confronted with the right of self-determination of a large number of people, and how can you preserve the integrity of a State by the use of mere threats? But that is only one case out of a large number which may arise at any time. The idea of preventing war is so attractive that many supporters of the League seem to believe that it

has already been achieved, and they have not, I believe, studied the terms of the Covenant. I commend to all such persons the very careful, cold, and dispassionate analysis of the terms of the Covenant made by the Swiss Federal Council in its message to the Federal Assembly of Switzerland. I believe that the League of Nations can, at best, prevent only small wars, which can be averted in other ways, but I do feel most seriously that it may lead to wars.

We have already, as the noble Earl the Leader of the House pointed out two years ago, the British Family of Nations, which is now being assailed by an organized conspiracy of very long standing. We have seen the deadly effect of propaganda to which the noble and learned Lord, Lord Sumner, referred in grave and earnest words on Tuesday last. By means of such propaganda the League might become a centre of dangerous intrigue against the British Empire. We were told the other day by the noble Lord, Lord Islington, that we ought to think internationally. If that means that we ought always to try and understand the point of view, and care for the interests of other nations, then I most cordially agree with him. But we have too many people already who cannot think nationally; there are very few among them who can really think Imperially in the true and best sense of that word; and the only international thinking that is likely to attract large numbers of people is that of the Red Internationale which, I believe, the League of Nations might be exploited to assist.

Lastly, I want to point out that in every State in the world constitutional government is now at stake. While that is the case can it be the right time to try and impose a form of super-national government? I envy the ideals of my noble and learned friend, but I feel sometimes that idealists are rather dangerous, and I think that, until human nature can be changed very considerably, the

present Covenant, as it now stands, is premature. I would not for a moment wish to abolish any of the machinery that has already been constructed. I wish to make purely constructive proposals, and they are these. Let the Covenant be carefully revised in such a way as to ensure the co-operation of America. That should be the first step. Then, let it proceed on the lines, which were laid down clearly by Lord Parker in this House, of restoring and developing International Law, which has been shaken to its very foundations during the war. Let it organize a strong Court of Arbitration at The Hague, but let it remember, as the noble Earl the Leader of the House said three years ago, that a hard-and-fast juridical system could only be attended with failure. Let it endeavour to unite all the nations of the world by mutual treaties of arbitration.

That is a work which would keep it going for a good many years, and might lead to the most valuable results. And there is much more work of an international character which the League can quite safely carry on, notably work connected with public health, and with social reforms of all kinds. There is a great work which the League could carry out in that way. But do let the League abandon some of its more extravagant claims, and let it be patient, and wait for a better time than the present. Unless it reconsiders its position in some respects, I am very much afraid that it may make itself ridiculous, as it very nearly did over the question of Persia the other day. The noble Earl the Leader of the House told us two years ago that former Leagues had expired in ridicule and scorn. That is exactly what all right-thinking men and women who have learned the bitter lessons of this war hope, and must do their utmost, to try to prevent.



## XXVII

### TRADE WITH SOVIET RUSSIA

(*"Financial Times," 13 January, 1921.*)

Lord Grey of Falloden has told us that "After the peace, more especially in the last two years of Mr. Lloyd George's Government, its proceedings and conduct of affairs stirred me with indignation and despair such as I have never felt about any British Government." No one could have felt this "indignation and despair" more keenly than I, and the Trade Agreement with the Bolsheviks "stirred" me in a special sense, because the honour of the nation appeared to be deeply involved. In the House of Lords on many occasions I tried to denounce this bargain with the forces of evil. Perhaps for this reason, I was pressed to write the article here reprinted. The effects of the Agreement, which I described, became at length so palpably intolerable that Mr. Baldwin's Government was forced to break with the Soviet Government which proceeded by way of retaliation to a fresh orgy of murder. We owe it to the Conservative Party that the country has been released from a degrading connection.

THE negotiations ostensibly directed to the establishment of trade with Bolshevized Russia have already done incalculable harm. I trace their inspiration to the amazing Prinkipo proposals, of which I wrote at the time :

"Imagine Pitt suggesting that Robespierre, Danton and Marat should be taken into conference side by side with representatives of the huge Royalist majority of the French people which they had attempted to destroy by massacre."

The sources of this suggestion have never been cleared up ; but the astute schemers at Moscow derived from it the impression that there were influences in this country

which could be effectively exploited. While, therefore, France and America declined negotiation in any form, and the Scandinavian countries quickly discovered that they were being tricked, the Kameneff (Rosenfeld) "mission" was permitted to establish itself in London.

The result was soon apparent. There can be no doubt that the setting up of the Council of Action here was due to this Bolshevik agency, and the effect was to inaugurate what the *Spectator* has rightly described as an "Illegal Government," provided with a Chancellerie which maintained communications with the Kremlin, and, like the German Embassy at Washington during the war, could carry on a continuous propaganda with objects of its own.

Rosenfeld was apparently too openly reckless, and the Government was forced to repatriate him; but under his prompting the Council of Action was able to announce that it had averted a war with Russia, which was never within the region of possibility. To Rosenfeld succeeded Krassin—an Amurath to an Amurath—and for months "negotiations" have been proceeding, which have subjected us to insult and humiliation.

Among the many suggestions emanating from this new "Embassy," which incidentally was able to arrange personally-conducted tours to enlighten labour leaders and others as to the joys of the proletariat Heaven, was the theory that unemployment would immediately cease with the reopening of trade. This was a clever move, because it had the effect of enlisting the sympathies of the Trade Unions in the cause of peace with the small band of conspirators which has murdered and enslaved the Russian working classes. Recognition is all that Lenin desired, as it would facilitate the starting of his "heavy civil war" in this country and would enable him to protract his bloodstained tyranny.

It has happened in China that one province could trade amicably with Powers actively at war with other parts

of the Celestial Empire ; but no Western Power in modern times has exhibited this elasticity of national sentiment until our Government decided to receive the Kameneff Mission. During the negotiations, of which from time to time we have had glimpses revealing the amenities of Soviet diplomacy, the Bolshevik autocracy has been at open war with us in Persia, while in Ireland, India, Egypt and Afghanistan it has done its utmost, with considerable success, towards wrecking the British Empire, on the maintenance of which the welfare of our working classes depends. In addition, it has murdered, robbed and shamefully ill-treated our countrymen and women who were within its power. The heartrending reports of the refugees who have escaped from the tender mercies of Krassin's masters contrast painfully with the prolonged conversations in comfortable London offices.

While the moral and political results of the negotiations have been disastrous, the economic prospects, which it must be assumed formed their basis, are evidently non-existent. It is Sir Robert Horne who tells us : " The real fact is that Russia has got no commodities to trade with." Everyone who has taken the trouble to follow the Bolshevik reports on the position of the industries which they have ruined is aware that this is the simple truth. On the other hand, we do not know precisely what gold and other liquid assets Lenin has at disposal. Cash, jewels and securities have been stolen from banks and from private individuals, many of whom have been tortured and murdered, and the large foreign loans of Russia have been repudiated with cruel effect upon many small French investors.

Mr. Urquhart, who has played a leading part in developing Russian resources with immense benefit to Russian workers, has explained how the Soviet Authorities, with inconceivable stupidity, have destroyed his undertakings and inflicted heavy loss upon British subjects. In January

of last year the Treasury permitted the encashment here of Chinese bonds evidently stolen from a Russian bank, and Lenin may have more securities of this class. Gold reserves belonging to the Russian people have been appropriated by the Moscow camarilla. Wedding rings have been snatched from the fingers of widows, and even the gold stopping of "bourgeois" teeth has not been immune from the rapacity of their myrmidons. Stolen precious stones have been sold in London, and how far this process has been carried on we cannot tell.

A cargo of timber stolen from one British subject was sold to another under Krassin's auspices, but happily a British Court was able to intervene. This incident is peculiarly instructive, because it indicates what is likely to happen if we become the receivers of stolen goods capable of identification. Had a trade agreement been signed, it is probable that the plea that the adventurers who seized all power in Russia constituted a recognized Government—privileged to steal from its terrorized subjects—would have been set up, and Mr. Justice Roche might then have been forced to deliver a different verdict.

As the numerous minor Soviet officials are busily engaged in lining their pockets, commissars, for example, claiming the personal belongings of the victims they order to be shot, it may well be that the Central Authorities do not obtain control of all the wealth they have "nationalized." But the systematic looting of a vast country cannot have failed to produce substantial results, and Lenin and his confederates may therefore be in a stronger financial position than is generally supposed. The outgoings must, however, be on a large scale. If millions of Russians starve or die of the diseases which Soviet rule has spread far and wide, the Red Army on which that rule depends, the Chinese mercenaries employed to torture and kill, and the huge bureaucracy which Communism has created must be fed, clothed and paid enough to secure

their allegiance. The employers of Kameneff and Krassin cannot, apparently, make cash payments for British manufactures to an extent which would have any effect upon our unemployment. For this reason the dictatorship of the proletariat is now ready to give immense concessions to foreign capitalists, and although the Vanderlip "deal" is not likely to materialize, it proves what Mr. H. G. Wells was not permitted to discover.

"Peace with Russia" is an attractive catch-phrase, the origin of which is obvious; but peace *in* Russia, entailing the establishment of honest government and a return to the usages of law and civilization, is the great need of the world. As Mr. Urquhart has pointed out, you cannot "trade with a country in which private trading is defined as 'speculation' and is punishable by death." Nor can you touch pitch without being defiled. The only results of the disastrous negotiations which the Government was induced to undertake have been the encouragement of Bolshevism here, the prolongation of the martyrdom of Russia and the promotion of German aims.

Patriotic Russians who look forward to the New Russia, which will one day arise from the ruin—moral and economic—to which the red hand of Communism has reduced a great people, will find it difficult to forget the reception accorded to the emissaries of Lenin.

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1918. In *Nineteenth Century and After* (March) examines at length Socialist project for reconstructing



- society in the United Kingdom prepared for Labour Conference at Nottingham, and pronounces "Socialism, with its class-war, denial of freedom, destruction of the inducements to individual effort, and communistic principles which have always led to wholesale corruption and immorality," to be the "greatest enemy of Democracy," 291-315; and on 6 August in the House of Lords hostilely criticizes proposals in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report which, if adopted, might lead to the state of India becoming ultimately chaotic, 254-72;
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